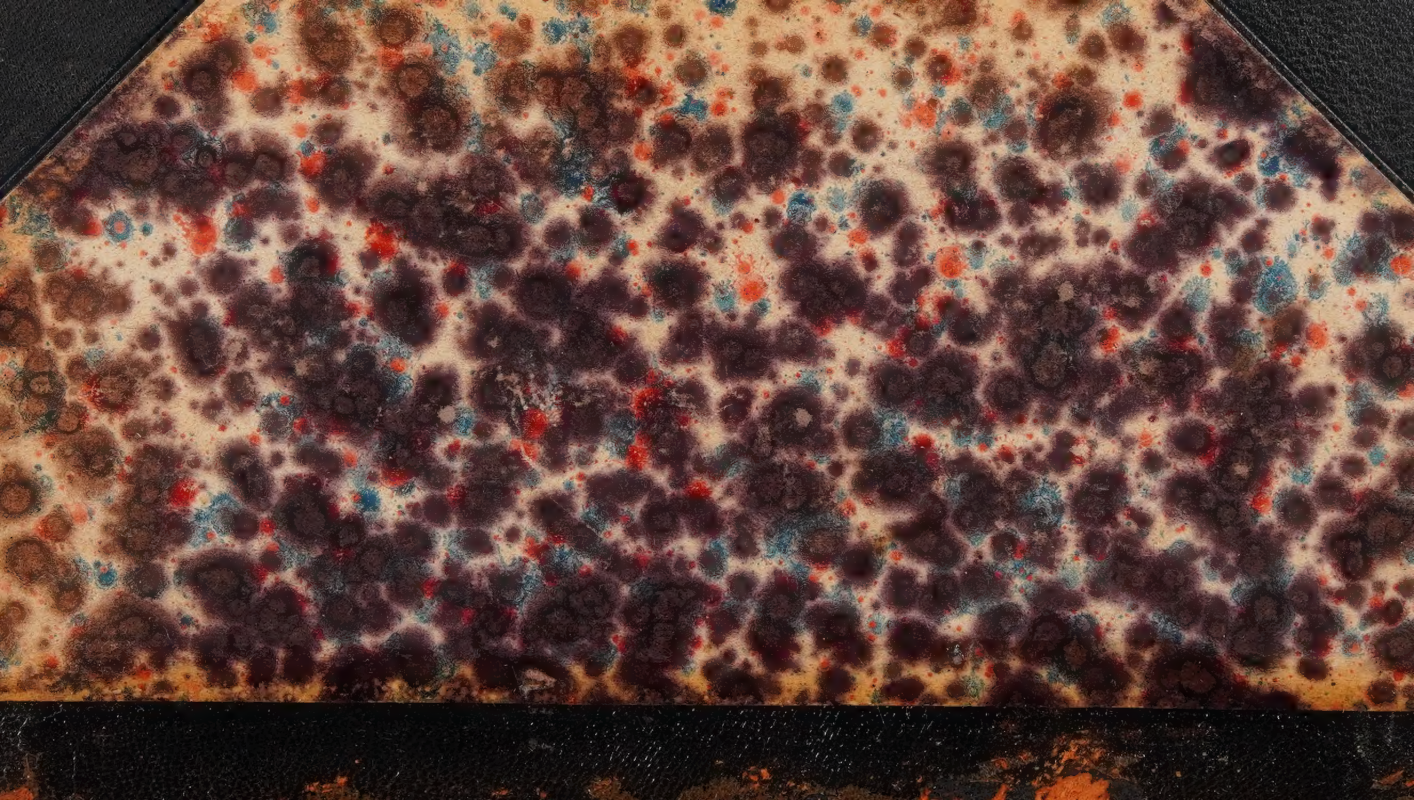

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DISCOURSES

ON

THE JEWISH RELIGION.

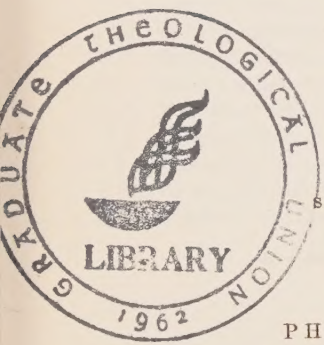
BY

ISAAC LEESER.

הלוא כה דברי נאם ה' כאש וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע:
ירמ' כג' כט':

"Behold! thus is my word, saith the Lord, like the fire, and like the hammer that shivereth the rock."

Jeremiah xxiii. 29.



VOL. III.

SECOND SERIES.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY SHERMAN & CO.
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PREFACE.

THE kind reception which has been extended to my first series of Discourses, published four years ago, and the frequent inquiries for a continuation of the same, have emboldened me to appear again before the public with this new claimant of their favour.—The present collection is rather less than a half of the former; since various interruptions, which I need not enumerate, independently of the shorter period during which they were delivered, prevented me from speaking as often as I might have wished. It is truly to be regretted that so far public addresses on religious topics have constituted but a small portion of our devotional exercises in all the countries where the English is spoken; and I believe that it may be said without any vanity on my part, that in our Synagogue was the first attempt made for about ten years past to give religious instruction in lectures. It can easily be imagined that there are many difficulties in the way of a successful pursuit of the calling of a public teacher among our people in this country, owing chiefly to the fact, that we are composed of persons from every European nation, and that therefore to many the English language is partly unintelligible, especially as in an oration the ideas cannot be always conveyed in very simple language, without divesting the subject of all dignity. Still much might be done in furtherance of the introduction and support of teaching by lectures, if those sufficiently well acquainted with the vernacular tongue of England and America would lend their countenance, and elect either ministers capable of speaking no less than reading after the accepted mode, or appoint public lecturers in addition to the usual officers of the Synagogue. No doubt the latter method would be more in accordance with the public wants; because the Reader proper has to perform duties sufficiently laborious without having to preach when the usual service is finished, or during the same. Besides this, it is

not likely that, generally speaking, there will be found many capable of officiating with equal ability in both capacities, of Preachers and Readers; especially as the requisite qualities for both stations have little in common beyond an acquaintance with the Hebrew language; since our worship is altogether in this tongue, and no one can be competent to expound the Text correctly without being, to say the least, moderately well versed in the original dialect of the Bible.—But there are two difficulties in the way: I mean that the smallness of our congregations and their limited means are great obstacles to carrying out this plan, even if competent preachers could be found, which is not the case now, except in very small numbers, owing to there being no schools of our own on a liberal scale, either in England or America. Hence the whole number of preachers as far as known to me among the Jews speaking English is but four; to wit: Mr. David Isaacs, of Liverpool and Manchester, England; Mr. Samuel M. Isaacs, of the Congregation Benai Yeshurun, New York; Mr. Moses N. Nathan, of the German Congregation, Kingston, Jamaica, and myself. It is true that occasionally lectures were delivered before the above commenced the calling of public teachers and since, by the late Rev. Gershom M. Seixas, of New York, the late Rev. Emanuel N. Carvalho, of Philadelphia, Rev. A. H. Cohen, of Richmond, Dr. Jacob De La Motta, of Charleston, and several other ministers, besides occasional volunteer lectures from laymen (if such a word can be with propriety used among Israelites); but no appointment was ever made with a view to sermons except in the case of the Messrs. Isaacs, since Mr. Nathan and myself were only elected as Readers, and our speaking has therefore been a voluntary matter. The general wish, however, which has been expressed by many congregations to have sermons delivered in their Synagogues, chiefly at Charleston and St. Thomas, and the Portuguese Congregations of London and Jamaica, will no doubt lead ultimately to capable persons being appointed as teachers of the Word, and may induce several intelligent young men to qualify themselves for the ministry by careful preparation. The great evil hitherto prevailing has been that literary attainments have not been expected of our Readers; but it is to be hoped, that either additional officers will be appointed, or that those only will be selected who, in addition to a good voice and an acquaintance with the liturgy, have sufficient capacity to speak to their brethren if occasion requires. There is however in the usual management of the Synagogue something inconsistent with the appointment of men of

endowment to the station of minister, inasmuch as the temporal rulers have too much direct interference with the Hazan in every public act in which he can engage. Now it is all well and proper to leave the management of every temporal concern in the hands of the President and his assistants; but the minister should not be in the discharge of his proper duties altogether subservient to the temporal managers, who ought to confine themselves strictly to their branch of duty, and leave the public worship in the proper hands of those elevated to conduct it. It is in the nature of man to desire freedom of action; and the same feeling therefore which renders us restive under political subjection, will also create an uneasiness, far from promoting harmony, in the minds of ministers of religion if they are rendered subservient to persons who evidently cannot be more religious and better informed than they are themselves.—No doubt this evil originated in former years in the large congregations of Europe, which were always provided with Rabbins and teachers in sufficient numbers to require of the Reader nothing more than certain duties in the Synagogue, for which the chief requisites were, besides a correct moral and religious conduct, a thorough knowledge of the accepted tunes and the manner of performing the service, and these qualities very often constituted the whole of the qualifications demanded or desired. But the times have changed; and in America and England up to this moment there is not more than one Rabbi who can preach in English, the others being Germans, and those who are in this country came among us but recently; consequently it seems but reasonable to extend to the Readers some more consideration than they now enjoy, if the public expect duties from them, which their predecessors did not or could not accomplish. For as it is now, few indeed will be found, who have minds of sufficient capacity to acquire a knowledge of sciences and languages, to qualify themselves for the station of Reader and Lecturer, when they see that the pursuit of the legal and medical professions give them so much more ease, influence, and importance in society. It may be said, that persons should bring into the ministry a devotion to this noble calling, which will rise above the annoyances and deprivations of life: yet this is all well enough when the mind has once reached this elevation of piety by a long train of reflection and a long course of virtuous actions; but it cannot be expected that young men will qualify themselves for a station which is fraught with annoyance and deprivation, when the same labour otherwise directed will have very different

results. And surely it is the interest of all those feeling sincerely the holiness of our faith, to make it by their acts better understood and more loved, or, in other words, to be the means of inducing those endowed with high intellect to step forward to assume with pleasure and an animated ardour the responsible office of teacher of that blessed religion, which is our own inheritance, and our heavenly patrimony from ages which reach to the verge of civilization.

In Germany, principally I believe in the larger cities, for instance Hamburg, Berlin, Glogau, Prague, Frankford, Munich, and no doubt other places, Rabbins and lecturers have been appointed chiefly with the view of delivering weekly or occasional sermons; and of these, the fame of Bernays, Salomon, Kley, Plessner, Sachs, and others, has reached us even at this distance; and lately Miss Goldsmith, of London, has rendered a service to our literature by translating twelve sermons of Dr. Salomon into English, although it must be remarked that occasionally this learned preacher endeavours to force his own peculiar views rather too glaringly upon our attention. But it is to be expected that, as with every thing else, there will be a difference of opinion among the honestly thinking in matters of religion likewise, the more so since of late certain persons calling themselves reformers have endeavoured to introduce changes in our mode of worship. Now Dr. S. is the principal organ of this portion, a small one indeed thus far, and hence we cannot be surprised that we cannot always approve altogether of his ideas or of the manner in which they are presented to us; though to do him justice his style is very beautiful and fascinating, and his advice generally wholesome and pious. It is to be regretted that as yet the works of our other preachers have not obtained currency among the English-speaking Jews: still we may indulge the hope that by degrees such a taste may be awakened among them, that they will desire to possess these books, when the demand will no doubt be answered by some one capable of executing the task.

Whether preaching has been extensively introduced into the other European countries, I am not able to tell, not having any means at hand to answer the inquiry satisfactorily. But there is no doubt that a general desire for information has been awakened, and that in many places persons adequate for the labour have been summoned to extend a knowledge of religion among us. It is therefore also gratifying to announce, that latterly the Congregation at Baltimore and the German Congregation of this city have appointed public

teachers solely for the purpose of diffusing instruction. But as both congregations are mostly composed of Germans, and as the gentlemen elected are not yet acquainted with the English, the speaking is necessarily done in German, and hence it becomes in the first instance useful to a section only of our people residing in this country. Nevertheless it is a source of congratulation to see the increased demand for religious knowledge, and it is to be hoped that this good spirit may not alone be permanent, but become extended to other places which are as yet unsupplied with proper teachers.—Thus much may be said, that, although some may not at present perceive the use and importance of an addition to our service, which is at times somewhat long: the usefulness of sermons will nevertheless at length be generally acknowledged, so soon as a perseverance therein shall have demonstrated that thereby much information has been diffused, which must necessarily be the case, if the preachers or ministers are properly acquainted with their duties and alive to the wants of the people.

Upon the whole, however, the English and American Jews owe it to themselves to do something for the spread of religion, by establishing schools for general and religious education, whence ultimately they may derive proper persons to become ministers and readers. For no matter how much learning may be diffused in Germany and elsewhere, experience has proved that learned men even coming from there are but little qualified, except by a long and painful course of study, and then only in a defective manner after all, to become good pulpit orators. It is one thing to learn to read and write a foreign language, but something very different to acquire a facility for expressing one's ideas with propriety and ease, which is so highly necessary in the composition of sermons.—And if the ministry should then be sought by those whom the people know and esteem, and who are of their own friends and kindred: the standard of respectability of a Jewish Reader would be raised, and his station carry also with it more weight, than it now does, when the congregations are compelled to elect entire strangers to the highest honour in their gift as Jews, as they but rarely find native citizens qualified for the station in any manner whatever.

Not many years back such an advice would have been useless, owing to the then small number of Israelites in this country. But they are daily increasing, by immigration from the crowded districts of Europe; and although the new-comers are themselves unacquainted with the English, still their children will understand in

all likelihood no other language; hence the necessity of providing for the wants of the rising and coming generations.—All that is wanted is, union, concert, and harmony; and though our beginning may be small, our end will still be very great.

As regards the present publication I have to remark, that it is, like its predecessor, the sincere effusion of my heart and conviction; there is but little of artificial structure or a careful choice of words, although I have always endeavoured to keep close to the standard of Scripture as understood by us. Whoever expects to find evidences of deep learning in these discourses will surely be disappointed; since I can advance no claim to any extensive knowledge, and if I could, I would think a sermon not the vehicle for conveying it to the public, believing, as I do, that a religious lecture should be so simply constructed as to be intelligible, for the greater part at least, to the humblest capacity. The preacher ought to seek to enlist the feeling and judgment of his audience, but not to astonish them by the display of his own depth of information, by which he would clearly strive to glorify himself, without doing the least towards extending the kingdom of the Lord over the hearts of the flock intrusted to his care.

I cannot conclude these remarks without returning my sincere thanks to my friends at home and abroad who have so kindly, and in many cases without any solicitation, recommended and circulated my works, especially the first series of Discourses. This was an act of kindness I had no right to expect, and could only proceed from a belief that some little good might be derived from my labours. It would indeed be a source of high enjoyment to one whose days have not been free from sorrow and trial to be able to believe, that his striving has been of some use, if even it be only to arouse his brothers in faith to step forward unto the holy work, and to labour with more success and prosperity, though hardly with more honest zeal than their friend,

I. L.

PHILADELPHIA, { Tebeth 18th, 5601. / January 11th, 1841.

DISCOURSES

ON THE

JEWISH RELIGION.

DISCOURSE I.

CALL TO REPENTANCE.

God of truth, in whom there is no injustice! we have sinned before Thee; have often transgressed thy precepts, and departed from thy righteous commandments. The measure of our iniquities has been filling up ever since we came on earth; and not alone that we have erred ourselves, but our example too has led others to stray far away from the road of salvation. Rebellious, froward, and perverse, we have disregarded the eternal welfare of our immortal souls, and have dared thy vengeance, O Creator of all flesh! by obeying impulses to sin the end of which is perdition and thy just indignation. But, Father, King, Saviour! look on our forlorn state, degraded by our sin, dispersed by our transgression, captives by our rebellion! Have mercy, we pray Thee, for thy own

sake, if not for ours; display thy power over us not for the sake of our merit, but because of thy great and holy name, that is profaned among the nations; for why should the gentiles say, "Where now is their God?" For we know Thee to be the omnipresent, ever wakeful Ruler from whom nothing is hidden, as Thou hast said through thy prophet, "Were a man to hide himself in secret, should I not see him?" Teach then the children of man, that the descendants of thy servants yet receive thy especial providence, though fallen by their sins! Guide us unto thy service, enlighten our souls by thy knowledge, and remove from us the heart of stone, in order that we may serve Thee, O Almighty One! with a willing spirit in submissiveness and truth. Let it also be heard proclaimed from before the seat of thy mysterious presence, when the gates of thy judgment-seat are closed, that the sins of thy people have been forgiven, and that their transgression has been pardoned, and that their backsliding has been cured by thy mercy. May this be thy will, now and for ever. Amen.

Brethren!

The recurrence of the season of repentance has called us again to the house of our Father, to offer up in his presence the sacrifice of a contrite heart. For disguise it as we may, it must be acknowledged that the names of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* awaken in the mind of an Israelite ideas of devotion and a renewal of a resolution to become reconciled to Him above whom by our misdeeds we have haply offended. Be it admitted that this is owing to our

system of education, nurtured by early instruction, encouraged by example, and peradventure fostered by the fear of punishment. Admit it to be so; yet we say, Blessed be that system, honoured be that early instruction, welcome be that example, ay, thrice blessed be that fear which tend to draw closer the bonds which unite man to his Maker, which, so to say, remove the barriers which stand between him and his true happiness.—For, what is it that is to be effected by this exhibition of devotional feelings? is the greatness of any one man or sect of men to be promoted thereby? or is the wealth of a class of priests to be augmented? will it bring power to the teachers even of religion? None of these can surely be the result, as in our present state the influence of religious superiors is but little heeded, and can, from a combination of circumstances, not be very extensively exercised; on the contrary, whatever is done for the extension of religious feelings is solely beneficial to the community at large, because every participant is thus rendered a more worthy, more intelligent, and more happy member of the community, than he could otherwise be. For name not the delusive dictates of a worldly philosophy, that would inculcate honesty from mere prudential motives: such motives will not stand the test of temptation; they will yield to the influence of interest whenever this loudly calls. Name not love of honour! Ambitious men seek elevation whenever the opportunity offers, regardless of the means which lead to their desired end. Wisdom also and learning in worldly things are not safeguards against temptation; for the worldly wise are not always wise, nor are the

learned always prudent. No; neither prudential philosophy, nor ambition, nor wisdom, nor worldly learning, will save you from doing the wrong, but only the knowledge of the ways of our heavenly King; for this will guide you ever aright, and in acting accordingly you need never fear of injuring yourselves or others. When then I see a multitude enter these walls, when I hear, as I have heard, a unanimous shout of praise ascend from the mouths of hundreds of believers to the great Eternal's throne, I feel a wish that thus might ever be their desire to serve Him whom their words declare their God; for then would it be well with them and their children for ever. But alas! we leave the house of God, the Day of Atonement is past, and yet rings in our ear the shout "The Lord he is God!" the voice of the cornet yet vibrates within us: when we forget that we have been actors in a holy scene, witnesses of a sacred work, listeners to the word of truth; we enter anew into the deceitful press of worldly engagements, forget the Rock who has formed us, mindful only of augmenting our wealth and increasing our importance in the eyes of men. It is sickening to reflect that so much devotion as is at times suddenly seen to flash up, as does the light of some dim lamp when a sudden change of wind causes the flame to shoot upward, should sink down again into dimness when the exciting cause is past. Happy indeed it is, that the wind of the passions cannot extinguish the sacred flame, or else we should be left in total mental darkness, like the traveller in a swampy desert whose taper expires beneath the gust of air which he fain welcomed as cooling his fevered forehead, burning

under the agony of weary exertions. Yes, it is melancholy in the extreme to be conscious that so many Days of Pardoning of Iniquity have recurred, and yet the worshippers then assembled did not remain permanently united to their God, whose forgiveness they invoked with apparent sincerity! Does any one think it enough to worship once a year? Have we not the ordinance of the seventh day as a perpetual covenant between God and the children of Israel? why is this not also observed? Ha! is it interest, the desire for wealth that counsels us? But wo! wo! that gold should tempt us to forego the pleasure of a tranquil mind and a peaceful soul rejoicing in her attachment to God! Wealth! O how fleeting its blessings! how deceptive its hope! Religion! O how everlasting in its blessings, how sure the hopes it inspires.

Yet, this land was blessed, is blessed. Fruitful are its fields, extensive are its forests; through untrodden regions extend its thousand majestic rivers; its seashore is crowded with the commerce of the world; its sails whiten every ocean; through its numerous towns resound the shouts of merriment; the people are secured against oppression, if they but preserve the spirit of their laws; peace may be said to dwell in the boundaries thereof, and each man may sit under the shade of his fruit-tree with none to make him afraid. If ever prosperity seemed to have taken up her abode in any land, this might have been pointed out to the inquiring sage; since all the elements of contentment were so profusely scattered abroad. But lo! the avarice of man has destroyed much of the

good we once saw, and the hammer of the artisan has been arrested in the midst of plenty and peace; the weaver's loom stands idle, and even the press, the supplier of intellectual repasts, is almost paralyzed in an age boasting of knowledge and refinement. It is not for us to enter deeply in the causes of this spectacle; enough it is so; and does it not teach us, in a language not to be misunderstood, that worldly pursuits will not always secure the object desired? and that immoderate possessions fail to promote contentment?

Yet there is a turn in the tide of prosperity, as well as of wo, and when greatness is at its height, it suddenly changes to degradation, shame, and ruin. Need we cite examples? History teaches us of great conquerors, overthrown on the day of triumph; and experience has informed us, that wealth, when seemingly the strongest, secured almost beyond the reach of casualties, is then nearest utter prostration, and we may almost say its possessor is near penury. The occurrences of the last few months have amply confirmed this, and also that success or failure in our enterprises are from a Source higher, greater, holier than human power or human wisdom; and that person indeed must be blind to the events of the moral world, who would suppose that what our own eyes have seen has not been the work of God. Yes, we may freely assert, that in order to prove how vain, how deceitful, how impotent are human endeavours, has the Almighty permitted the blight of reverses and sudden changes to fall on many lands; thus showing us that not by our wisdom, not by our own energies, not by our own combinations, no matter how

skilfully soever they be arranged, can we look forward to success, if He, to whom all is subject, denies his blessing. Call it not superstition, imagine not it is blind bigotry, to assert that in our own daily experience we see the finger of God made manifest. No, friends, no, believing brethren, it is indeed in these daily occurrences that we are reminded, that there is a judging God superintending the affairs of man, ready to exalt the humble to a high eminence, and to cast the presumptuous into the depth of degradation. If we take such a view of life, we will be comforted in our stations, and be content with the sphere of action pointed out to us by circumstances, the unerring indicators of our call.—Understand me not as saying, that there is an inspiration vouchsafed to us by which we are taught to know the precise calling we are to follow, but only as maintaining that to every man light is given, and a road pointed out which, if followed, will teach him how to be useful to himself and others. There are, accordingly, many in private life who, as fathers, as friends, or advisers do more to promote the service of Heaven, than those who profess to be teachers of religion. To such it may be freely said, "Persevere, pious ones, your reward will be great;" and of them it may be maintained, that they are happy, useful, and content, although wealth and importance in the sight of the world are not their portion. How few, however, are found willing to abide content with their lot! alas! how small is the number of the meek in spirit, who seek not vain-glory!

Man steps abroad, and finds that wealth gives the possessor a rank in life, which no wisdom, no probity

can impart. He sees the man of power courted, flattered, praised, envied by the thoughtless multitude; he farther discovers, that a strict pursuit of religion will restrain the unceasing toil for wealth; he fancies, that in place of the ways of the law being ways of pleasantness, they only tend to keep him hindmost in the race, in the scramble, to use an expressive word, for the shining baubles which lure the million. He sees no necessity for him to be distanced, outdone by his equals. He therefore pursues means equally noxious, equally culpable, in order to reach the same end. No day of rest is now known to his active spirit; no festival, no Sabbath, restrains his step from busy pursuits; nay, not sleep know his eyelids in the noon of night. For awhile his prosperity is seemingly boundless, and wealth, gold, jewels crowd upon him in masses uncounted,—he only sees before him an unending career of greater and farther aggrandizement; he therefore perceives no evil in his course. But suddenly the airy fabric breaks up like a spectral illusion of a nightly vision, and the deceived dreamer at length discovers to his horror that he has grasped a shadow and pursued an atom, an almost nothing.—Or take the man of power who imagines, in his rapid ascent to greatness, that to his superior soul the grovelling multitude must yield ready obedience; he may perhaps fancy in his self-delusion that he is fortune's favourite, and that to his prosperity there is no end; but suddenly the evil reaches his heart also, like the tornado that shivers the bark, the hope of the mariner, upon the very strand where he trusted to find a speedy and safe harbour; and when too late, he discovers that his fancied security was his ruin. What

consolation can such as these find in their downfall? where are they to seek for comfort, seeing that their desired happiness has taken wing and left them to despair?—And, nevertheless, for ends like these will men turn their backs, as it were, upon the law of God, and lend a deaf ear to the admonition of the Most High! They lightly regard his favour, provided they can be esteemed wealthy and powerful; and if but riches and glory are theirs, they heed not how many unwary have been deceived, through how many rivers of blood they have to wade. And why? because they know not the pleasure of humble content; because they heed not, believe not, know not the word of God. I speak advisedly, they believe not, they know not! Think not, brethren, that a mere knowledge of the words of Scripture is such a knowledge as is required of us, or that a mere acquiescence in the dogmas of the Bible is the belief demanded. Something more is necessary; for you should know religion practically; you should be agents, foremost among the energetic who love God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might; and your belief should be displayed by an ever-resisting of all temptation which might make the pursuit of wealth and power the primary, that of piety the secondary object of your life. The want of such knowledge and faith it is now which causes so many to err; they have never learned to feel how happy, how content they can be with small means, while they are active in the service of their Maker; they know not, they believe not, that the righteous do not envy their powerful neighbours, and wish not, though humble, to exchange places with the proud and pre-

sumptuous. Besides, though acknowledging constantly in words their being mortal and accountable, they act as though their mortality were doubtful, and their accountability as if it never would be exacted. Hence, as we said above, they halt at nothing in their chosen course, and year after year elapses, and they pursue the same path of destruction, and excuses ridiculous in the extreme are offered to lull their own conscience, and to impose upon others the idea that they are sincere in thinking themselves acting rightly. Shallow devices! whom do they deceive? can they hide their enormity from themselves, though others are deceived? or even if they do impose on themselves, does the Almighty not know? does He not search their inward thoughts? does He not understand the desire of every heart?—Yes, truly does this ONE know, truly does He understand the vanity of our striving; the impotency of our knowledge; the weakness of our strength. He has therefore ordained two remedies for our sinful nature. The one, the *law* He imparted to our ancestors; the second, *repentance*. The law contains the living precepts, which if a man obey he will live through them. In their execution there is no strife, no oppression, no hatred of our equals, no envy of our superiors; but all is peace within and love without. For the man that truly endeavours to shape his course by the law of Moses has the cynosure of the bright starry heaven, which never sets, which never is obscured by clouds and darkness, but ever guides him onward—onward—to his port of destination—the embrace of his Maker—the favour of his Father—the countenance of his God.—But if misled by folly, by the love of gain, by

the dictates of sinful ambition, we go astray from this holy path; if the temptations of a sinful life have induced us to forego our inward peace—our love of God—our affection for our fellow-men: then is the remedy of penitence provided for us by which we can become reconciled to the Lord of our destinies. We are not utterly rejected, because of our wrongs; we are not abhorred, because we have erred. No! for "He being merciful forgiveth iniquity, and destroyeth not, nor awakeneth all his wrath;" this is the language of Scripture, and presents us the consoling hope, that the God of love, "all whose ways are justice," and who himself is TRUTH, will receive us again in favour when we return to Him in confidence of pardon, in consciousness of sin. We must not however exculpate our misdeeds by vain excuses, by false, specious, self-complacency; for this would be clinging with lingering affection to our deformity, whilst we profess to regret its existence. Neither must fear of loss prevent our leaving off the evil of our ways; for such a course would be telling in effect that, though we acknowledge our sinfulness, we cannot renounce the cause of our sinning, and that we love thus the creature more than the blessed Creator,—the means of subsistence better than everlasting bliss, in short, the world with its allurements better than God!

Nor must the opinion of the world deter us. For there are many who sin from a love of companionship, so to say; they have associates who pursue an ungodly course of life, while they at first have but light foibles, or transgressions in miniature; by degrees they increase in sin as they grow older; foibles then

have become habits; again time elapses, and inveterate habits have degenerated yet farther into vices, but still the companionship of others causes them to look upon them as excusable, ay, as matters perhaps to boast of. Need I prove to you by examples innumerable, that men have been drunkards together? robbers together? blasphemers together? debauchees together? when each by himself would not have dared so to brave public opinion? Say not it was the mean low-minded villain that sunk thus—would to Heaven that this were so! but in all ages the wise too have sinned, and a Korah, a chief in his tribe, rebelled against the chosen of God, the confided in of men; princes of their families maligned the land of promise; a son of David drove his father from his home; a Jeroboam erected golden calves to mislead the people, and innumerable others, renowned for intellect, have ever sunk in the slough of iniquity. Were it that no man could hope to find others willing to join him, he would hardly be so eccentric—that is the precise idea which rules many—as to act wickedly for himself; but as unfortunately the sinners are so innumerable, the lover of fellowship cannot see why he should be so unfashionable, so odd, so eccentric, so singular, as to adhere to the homely ideas and customs of the Jewish nation, "For who nowadays," he may say and think, "heeds such antiquated notions?" But let us argue the point with him. What is there of the weakness of garrulous old age in the precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart?" What of dotage is to be discovered in the ordinance, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart?"—Or say, has the advanced state of society

made the observance of the Sabbath less useful? We will admit, that the wealthy idler, to whom time is a burden the endurance of which is intolerable, may not find any necessity for allowing his horse to rest on the seventh day; he may not be able to appreciate why he should abstain from following his pursuits of pleasure on the day of rest; but how is it with the labourer, the artisan, the husbandman—have they not also a claim to enjoyment and relaxation? is their toil never to end? is their life to be one continual, unbroken, perpetual servitude?—Or again: "And thou shalt make the Passover." Can the man of the world gainsay the debt of gratitude that is due to the Deity for the many benefits which Israel has received from his bounty?—We could multiply these instances, but for the present enough has been shown to prove the utter absurdity of such excuses. Yet the sociable sinner will allege, that it is unreasonable to forego the advantage of sinning as others do. He imagines that others will outstrip him in the race of wealth and preferment, unless he strives to emulate them. If one works on the Sabbath, he will earn more than he who rests. This is the excuse constantly offered. Yet does it not appear to you, without any argument, that Sabbath-breaking cannot be defended on such grounds? for, if ever so much is gained thereby, it is wrong to offend against acknowledged obligations. Besides all this, it is not clear that offending the Deity is productive of wealth—or piety the companion of poverty. This, however, no one will maintain, for not all the wicked are rich, nor are the servants of God all languishing in want. Still, and despite of all this evident refutation of the excuses of backsliding,

we are deterred from amending, because we would thereby appear inconsistent. We would be laughed at, if we went to Synagogue, where before we were seldom seen. We would be ridiculed, if we were to cease our labour on the Sabbath, which before we regarded not. We would be called weak-minded, if we refused joining a sinful repast, participating in a drunken carousal, because our conscience had only been newly awakened to the sinfulness of such doing. But why should we hesitate to separate ourselves from the throng of the thoughtless, when we feel a call within to seek the approach to God? Why should we fear to incur loss, when we strive to make our peace with our Maker? why should we wish to frame excuses unto ourselves, when we come to appear before the Searcher of hearts with the humble offering of prayer?

This then should be our repentance, a sincere self-accusation, an entire rising above the thought of paltry gain, a complete severance from associates whose manners are corrupted and corrupting.—If this is our new conduct, we will soon lose the pride of self-sufficiency, be enabled to serve God in truth, and to resist temptation, no matter how seductive it may appear. This is the heart of flesh of which the Scriptures speak; this is the liberal spirit, the pure soul for which David prayed. And thus speaks Ezekiel (xviii. 31, 32):

השליכו מעליכם את כל פשעיכם אשר פשעתם בם
ועשו לכם לב חדש ורוח חדשה ולמה תמותו בית
ישראל: כי לא אחפץ במות המת נאם ה' אלהים
והשיבו וחיו: יחזקאל יח' לא' לב':

"Throw off from you all your transgressions with which you have transgressed, and make unto yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, and why will you die, O house of Israel? For truly I desire not that the guilty should die, saith the Lord God; return then and live."

"Throw off from you all your transgressions,"—how is this to be effected? by "making yourselves a new heart and a new spirit;" if formerly you were presumptuous, self-sufficient, loving the world more than God, placing the temporal above the eternal, you should alter all this, and endeavour to love your Father, walk humbly before Him, and follow his ways, and as He is merciful, be you merciful; as He is truth, so love you truth, and as his goodness is over all his creatures, so do you scatter the fruits of your beneficence unto the rich as well as the poor. If so you act, ye who are of the loins of Israel, how sweetly will your memorial rise before the Judge of all! brighter far than the morning will your light break forth; you will call, and the Lord will answer, and the glory of God will receive you, will gather you unto happiness. Glorious indeed would be a Day of Atonement which closes with such changes; happy indeed would we all be if the coming morrow would receive in this house penitents, servants newly awakened to the service of the Most High. Then indeed would our sins be forgiven, and as it was said to David of old, would it be recorded in the book of life: "The Lord hath also caused thy sin to pass away; thou shalt not die."

Father! in thy name do Thou bless us; remove our transgression from thy sight, and rend the evil decrees which concern us, and renew to us a year of

happiness and content, a year of love and rejoicing, a year of peace and repentance, and open unto us and all Israel the gates of favour and mercy, of prayer, of knowledge in thy law; restore thy kingdom unto thy chosen David son of Jessé; guide us unto thy truth, and receive us into thy embrace, there to dwell securely unto everlasting. Amen.

Tishry 7th.
October 6th. } 5598.

NOTE.—The foregoing address was composed with especial reference to the distress in the commercial world, which fell like a blight upon many countries in the year 5597 (1837), as it appeared to me of sufficient importance and significance to call the attention of the brethren to this fact, as proving the inefficacy of human means to insure success, if divine blessing is not sent to prosper the labour of our hands.

DISCOURSE II.

THE REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL.

GUARDIAN of Israel! who hast preserved thy people amidst all their sorrows in all their wanderings in the lands of their alien oppressors, and hast guarded them as the apple of thy eye, so that there never was wanting one of the children of Jacob to stand before Thee and to serve Thee: continue unto us also thy favour and guide us with thy knowledge, that we may know the ways of thy law; and lead us with thy

grace, that our feet may stand firmly; bestow on us thy bounty, that we may be satisfied of thy abundant goodness; and let thy countenance be lifted up unto us, that we may enjoy peace when in this perishable life, and obtain glory and happiness when Thou takest our spirits unto thyself, when by thy decree our appointed days on earth are fulfilled. May this be thy will, now and for ever. Amen.

Brethren!

The festival, on which we annually celebrate our redemption from the slavery we had to endure by divine decree in the land of Egypt, is close at hand, and it is meet, according to the custom sanctified by usage, law, and feelings of gratitude, that we should reflect upon this event with emotions of thankfulness to that infinite Being who watches over us in our afflictions and is the Arbiter of all events which occur among the children of his creation. To the unthinking the recurrence of a festival is viewed either as a time of physical rejoicing, or they neglect it as a season which merits not their regard. But not so with Israelites fortified by faith and instruction; to them the festivals bring rejoicing and gratitude, they honour them as seasons devoted to the service of the Almighty, and they improve them as fit occasions to awaken a love for the divine law in their hearts. Let us view the going out of Egypt in the proper light, not with the levity which unbelievers are apt to indulge in, and we will discover in it, what it was intended to be, a beginning for the dawn of liberty, not for Israel alone, but for all nations, and a liberation of the mind from false ideas of the Deity, not

for Jacob's sons alone, but also for all the descendants of Noah. Without going too far into the details of history, we will briefly advert to the state of society in the days of Abraham and subsequently thereto. The only book which can correctly guide us is the book of Genesis, as there exists no account having the least claim to authenticity equal to this, and surely fabulous histories cannot much assist the inquirer after truth, farther than to teach him how far the minds of reasoning men may be misled if incorrectly informed. To proceed: When Abraham first began to diffuse the worship he professed, we find that the country in which he lived, then and now called Palestine and the land of Canaan, was divided into innumerable little principalities and kingdoms, and every city almost appears to have been independent of its neighbour, yet each subject to a king, the arbiter of life and property, as will appear from the address of the king of Sodom to Abram: "Give me the persons and the property taken unto thyself." (Genesis xiv. 21.) War and bloodshed, even to the extermination of entire tribes, seem to have been the occupation of these petty tyrants; whilst the morals and worship of the people seem to have been totally neglected. The warnings of the flood and the miraculous confusion of tongues appear to have left no trace behind, so regardless was every one of the divine decrees given to Noah. A man was assaulted for harbouring strangers; and even in Egypt, a country so boasted for its learning and a knowledge of true religion, as some aver, a wayfarer justly dreaded the loss of life, because his wife was blessed with a comely person. The coun-

tries surrounding Palestine were no better off; since we find that princes of various tribes confederated to make a murderous inroad from the distant Euphrates unto the confines of Egypt. Also in a later period, when Jacob left the country of Aram between the rivers, he was pursued by his relative Laban, who carried with him an armed band of his own followers ready to do his bidding even to the slaughtering of women and children. What the condition of the more distant regions from the centre of civilization was we have no means of ascertaining; still we may reasonably conclude, that only the strong hand of every individual could secure to him the possession of life, liberty, and his laboriously acquired wealth. Peaceful pursuits, uninfluenced by fear of predatory warfare, could not be thought of; the sword alone gave security, and the strong of hand ruled heavily over the weak and timid. Whatever of truth was known on earth became the exclusive property of, and was communicated, as mysteries, to an exclusive class of priests, who had peculiar privileges, peculiar dress, manners and knowledge from the rest of the community, even if we admit that a knowledge of the true God was in their possession. This, however, is by no means certain. It is no doubt true that, when the apostacy of mankind first began, it was a wilful going astray,—man refused to submit to divine rule, and followed ordinances of his own inventing; and that, whilst so transgressing, the knowledge that there exists an almighty Creator, who communicated his will to the progenitor of the human race, was not taken from him: yet it is not probable that he would teach his children the duties

which he refused to execute, and the knowledge which did not withhold him from adopting erroneous opinions. If even, however, to go a step farther, the first ages communicated the truth to a chosen few, and held up a symbolic worship to the multitude which they in their own hearts deemed to be false: yet we may maintain that this did not continue for many centuries, and that within five generations from the confusion of languages one chaotic state of irreligion pervaded all mankind with the exception of the few, who practised the precepts handed down to them by "the father of a multitude of people." In his day we yet find that a Malchi-Zedek was a priest of the Most High God, residing in Salem, afterwards the renowned city of Jerusalem. But when the land of Canaan was conquered we do not find a vestige of the true worship among the Jebusites, who then inhabited this part of Palestine, and doubtless did so in the days of Abraham. It is due, however, to truth to state to you in this place, that there is one passage in the book of Genesis which gives some colour to the hypothesis that it was customary to communicate the knowledge of the truth to a few, to the exclusion of the many. It is in the following words (Gen. xviii. 18, 19): "Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken concerning him." In this extract, we find that Abraham is praised for the knowledge God had of him, "that

he would command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord;" from which phraseology it might be inferred that others possessed of the same knowledge would not so communicate it universally, but only to a few, or a class especially privileged for its acquisition. This however is the only passage which now occurs to me, in the least calculated to favour the theory that heathenism is based upon truth. But admit the whole as proved; say that the Creator was worshipped by the priests, while the multitude fell prostrate before images, gods made by their own hands; grant that in the mysterious writings which the sacerdotal order may have possessed they treasured up knowledge of high and holy things unknown to the unworthy, unlettered, superstitious nations whose spiritual guides they were (I use the word spiritual guides in the sense it is used among us, though they were seducers rather than guides): still we may reasonably deny the utility of any system, which will leave the many in ignorance, and establish an aristocracy of information, a tyranny worse even than the fetters with which the task-master binds the slave after finishing his daily toil. For, what is the object of religion? It is to bind the creature to his Maker by the ties of affectionate devotion and reverential fear; it is to teach man to feel that he is dependent upon the great Omnipotent whose servant he is; it is to teach the son of the earth to look to the infinite Judge to right him in his cause, and to save him when in affliction. In short, religion should promote the love and fear of God, and plant hope, humility, faith and confidence in the human breast, of the lowly no less than

the exalted. If then man is taught to offer his adoration to imaginary things, the creations of fraud or deception, how is he to obtain the requisites of religion to render his life happy and his death peaceful? He bows to the image of the sun: is this to teach him devotion? He worships the abstraction of the planets: is this to inspire him with faith? In a word, can error produce the effects of truth? Even assume a man sincere and ardently devoted to the symbolic worship, if you please to call it so: still the pure adoration of the One Supreme, the holy flame of devotion kindled in the pious mind by a contemplation of his mighty deeds, cannot grow up amidst the rank weeds of error. And if the priests or the privileged class, we alluded to, alone are possessed of a better knowledge, and allow not the community to participate therein, is it not, as was stated, forging galling chains of intolerable servitude of the mind, injurious far more than the thraldom of the body? But this latter calamity was also the legitimate consequence of the general degeneracy; and tyranny and oppression followed in its train, till all mankind groaned under the yoke of misrule, and no nation was free, while designing men, under the garb of priests, soothsayers, oracles and diviners, ruled by their advice or secret machinations the public mind.

It is often boasted that universal toleration of all beliefs was the general custom of heathen people, but that with the rise of revelation persecution for opinion's sake became more and more prevalent. But, again, we may reasonably question the general truth of the assertion. For although in certain lands there may have been no prohibition against worshipping

any of the many idealities which besotted men set up as gods: still we find from authentic records, and confirmed by traditions, that it was dangerous to worship the Lord of heaven and earth.—Of positive history we have the account of Daniel, which relates how his three friends were cast into a burning furnace, because they would not worship the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar; in Darius's reign a prohibition was promulgated against any one praying for a period of thirty days, under pains of being cast into the lion's den. Ahab and Jezebel slew all the prophets of the Lord, and only Elijah escaped. Antiochus and his generals endeavoured to banish totally from the Hebrews the knowledge of their religion; and a persecution as bitter as ever was waged against us by any sect, or which any people inflicted on another for the sake of a difference of opinion, was waged for many years, till the land was freed, by bloody wars and unparalleled deeds of heroism, from its ruthless oppressors.—Traditions and writings, current only among ourselves, do not lack instances of a similar nature; and it is said that Abram, before he left Ur in Chaldea, was tried by fire because of his belief in the One Supreme, and for the destruction of his father's idols. An interesting narrative on this subject might easily be compiled, but it would lead us too far from our present purpose. Enough has been shown that idolaters were not always tolerant; and even if they had been, what does it amount to? simply that in the mode of worshipping common among them, the things to be adored were unlimited, and each person made unto himself such an emblem as his fancy chose, and sought to attract attention, as men now

do to articles of merchandise, by exhibiting some proof of its superior excellence. Witness the oracle erected by Micah, the Ephraimite, which by the management of the pseudo-priest obtained a great celebrity among the tribe of Dan, at the time when idolatry flourished among Israelites. Witness also the oracle of Delphi, and other divinations of ancient pagans, where a certain degree of cunning and artful double-dealing benighted the minds of inquirers, whilst they believed themselves in possession of divine replies. Of course, under such a system it was dangerous for the worshippers of one falsity to attack that of the other too much, and the policy of the priests, who knew at least themselves that their art was mere deception, must have been not to interfere with each other unless their interest suffered thereby. But if even we concede them a thorough and sincere conviction, for the mind may labour under strange hallucinations: still the great alleged toleration may have proceeded from the knowledge that there must be something yet beyond the things then adored, more powerful, more energetic, and more holy. Nevertheless a Socrates was accused of blasphemy for approaching the truth; and Moses feared to sacrifice unto God among Egyptians out of dread of persecution. It will, therefore, appear that toleration was not inherent in paganism, nor universal among pagan nations, and it is not supported by any historic evidence to fasten intolerance upon the early possessors of revelation, nor upon the receivers of the law from Sinai. Abraham was charitable to all; his house received the traveller of the desert, and believers and idolaters were fed of his bounty. With the Canaan-

ites he lived at peace, and he swore fealty and truth to people whom he once feared as enemies of his life. Isaac and Jacob were no less distinguished for their benevolence to the people among whom they dwelt; and we may safely aver that the history of the patriarchs furnishes no instances where a single trace of intolerance or bigotry is discoverable. Certainly the fragment of the life of Joseph which has come down to us does not afford any evidence of intolerance; for we find nowhere a picture of greater truth and fidelity than is given in that simple and short narrative. Equally futile is it to look in the law of Moses for evidences of intolerance. In not a single passage is persecution for opinion's sake allowed; and if you take away the commandment enjoining the removal of idols from the land, we have even no prohibition against the worship of idols in Palestine by strangers: in truth, it would appear that no one had any right to see after their conduct in their own houses; and provided they offended not publicly the laws of the land, no one could molest them according to our institutions. The public prohibition of idolatry cannot, however, be called an act of intolerance. For emphatically speaking the law of Moses was the political as well as the moral code of our people; their thoughts, their actions, their worship, and their hope and prosperity, were all to be regulated according to its ordinances; idols were accordingly considered as a political nuisance, militating by their presence against the sovereignty of the Eternal Lord, the invisible King of the people He had chosen. According to this view, idolatry was naturally an offence against the state, its prohibition therefore no persecution, but merely the

enforcement of the acknowledgment of the Lord as the sole Sovereign of Palestine. At a future day we may enlarge on this subject, and place it in a stronger light before you; but at present we must hasten to resume the subject from which we started. We may therefore maintain that, since no persecution is authorized or even allowed by the Scriptures, and since the single prohibition of the possession of the idols was afterwards much neglected, greatly to the destruction of the peace and prosperity of Israel, it is not consonant with truth to charge the Israelites with the crime and folly of originating religious persecution.

We have thus seen that ignorance and tyranny had been made the lot of mankind, disfiguring, by their rapid strides, the creation of the Omnipotent. The warnings, as was said in the early part of this address, of the flood and the confusion of tongues had failed to instruct the world that the Ruler of the universe would not allow transgressions against his will to remain unpunished. It will therefore appear that retribution, nay the extermination of the entire mass of men, had failed of effecting the divine economy, the spread of a universal religion over the face of the earth. Two thousand years had rolled over the world since its first creation, and yet but few would acknowledge the great Creator who had displayed unto them so often his mighty power. Should He again desolate all? sweep off again the mass of mankind? If again they multiplied, the same consequence would have ensued, unless He, to whom all is possible, had vouchsafed to remove the tendency to evil inherent in human nature. But this suited not the plans of

the Lord, who, in forming man, had imparted to him the knowledge, and consequent choice, of good and evil. He preferred schooling the world to his service, and to educate his creatures, so to say, to a knowledge of himself, and to a correct perception of the truth. The time, indeed, may seem long to us, whose years are but brief, and whose thoughts are bounded by corporeal limits; but to Him, whose years are unending, and whose wisdom is infinite, what are three thousand years? is his existence affected by this to us long duration? Certainly not; and we therefore need not, should not, wonder that the world has been left gradually to come unto the service of the Lord, and that not any sudden change has been effected since the mission of Abraham. Your attention has before this been directed to the kind of education the world has undergone since the days of this great apostle; how God took him from his erring father's home, and, leading him through lands untrodden by him before his old age, caused him to teach the truth wherever he, the Patriarch, pitched his tent. You also know that after his death Isaac became the prophet and blessed one of the Lord, transmitting the truth to Jacob, whom his God surnamed Israel. You know also how the aged father went down to Egypt to behold his long-lost Joseph before his death. It was then in Egypt that the promise made to Abraham, "that his seed should be made as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand upon the shore of the sea" began to see its fulfilment. "The children of Israel increased and multiplied, and the land was full of them," so that the suspicions of the ruler of the land were aroused against them, and he devised a

plan for lessening the number of the strange people, whom his predecessor had invited to sojourn in the land of Goshen. A long servitude was this cunningly devised plan, and to it was at last added the slaughter of all the Hebrew male children. Imagine to yourselves a state more hopeless than this, if you can. To all the sickening horrors of perpetual thraldom, where the great leveller alone of all humanity can bring release from the galling bonds, was superadded the approaching annihilation of their entire race. The whip of the task-master, the cry of the driver, banished all thoughts of self-liberation from a people scattered all over the land of Egypt as slaves, compelled to build the towns of the king's treasure, to dig his immense canals, to construct his stupendous aqueducts, and to till the soil of their individual oppressors. We have no account of any attempted rising of the Hebrews; but where was the hope of its being of any use? Without arms, or at all events unused to wield them; without concert in their ranks; fatigued too much by day to brood in secret conclave over daring deeds by night; watched by troops that had overrun every land then known to civilization; perhaps mistrusting each other for fear of having by one evil report reaching the Pharaoh's ears their daily toil, as actually did happen, doubled in intensity: they were compelled to submit to a state of degradation, which perhaps long custom had made habitual to them. The father toiled whilst his strength endured; the son and grandson had to submit to a like yoke; and there was accordingly engendered such a feeling of inferiority to their free neighbours, as almost to place these in their own estimation in a

scale of excellence far above themselves. Similar circumstances produce similar effects in our own day, nay, in this very land, and this will give us some insight into the fact that deep-rooted hatred never prompted a violent outbreak during a period of full two hundred years.—The tradition that their forefathers had been the favourites of the All-Father was still current among them; they were yet distinguished in comeliness of feature and colour of the skin from the people among whom they lived; for even in servitude was Israel the peculiar people, and thus wisely had the Lord preserved this nation, which He had chosen for his service.—Living in luxury and at ease, a residence of so long a period might perhaps have caused them to amalgamate by degrees with the Egyptians; incipient repugnance would in progress of time have been dissipated, and consequently no distinct nation of Jacob's sons could ever have travelled out of the land of their sojournment. Observe now the divine economy. Immediately after the death of the sons of Jacob, by which the first link with our earliest fathers was broken, and when, consequently, the receivers of revelation had ceased to be on earth, the Lord suffered that the aversion of the Egyptians to the shepherd-people should take its natural course, that is to say, to produce a reciprocal aversion, strongest of course on the part of those who beheld the beasts they worshipped made the food or otherwise the merchandise of the strangers, whom they regarded first as sojourners and guests, and afterwards doubtless as intruders. It was also the will of God, that the children of Abraham should be servants during a part of the period appointed for their

being strangers in a land not theirs. But the sinful cruelty afterwards exercised we may reasonably believe was in contravention to the purposes of God, as much as the sinning of any one of us; the bondage, in short, was decreed, to preserve our people till they had grown up into a mighty nation, for imposing which the Egyptians would hardly have been accountable; but the cruel oppression of the individuals, the slaughter of children, the haughty contempt for the God of Israel, these were sins which merited and received condign visitation.—But whilst we had been thus preserved, we had, as already remarked, lost much, if not all, of our national self-respect, we were Israelites by compulsion more than any thing else, as the Egyptians were too proud to receive us among them as equals;* and although it is undoubted that many yet retained a due knowledge of and reverence for the simple worship of the patriarchs, still it is equally certain that the masses were tainted, if not wholly corrupted, by the system of idolatry among which they had so long dwelt. Yet during this period of suffering it was made manifest to them that there is a Power who forsakes not the humble, and who permits not the proud and lofty to bear down with too heavy a hand upon the lowly; for every device to diminish them had signally failed. Consequently all hope of better days had not perished within them; and when therefore the time of trial was ended, there were many, perhaps all, who at once readily believed the joyful message with which the prophet was charged,

* Witness the pride of Spanish nobles, that they are from an unmixed family, and not in anywise connected with persons outwardly Christians, descended from Jewish or Moorish families.

to announce unto them a speedy deliverance through the fresh display of the might of the Eternal One. Soon thereupon were wrought signs and wonders, deeds unheard of before and never since seen again were of daily occurrence, in order to prove "that there is none like the Everlasting Lord our God." The oppressor was made to feel that the Creator's power was yet capable of doing all as at the creation, and the Israelites were convinced that his promises never fail of a fulfilment, if even the period of suffering should have been continued beyond the time they imagined as the termination of patient endurance. All the world, too, was instructed that no one can withstand the outstretched arm that wields the everlasting sceptre; and the contemner of the heavenly mandate succumbed and said, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked;" and again, "Rise and go out from the midst of my people, you as well as the children of Israel; but bless me too." Joyfully the ransomed went forth, and thus was completed the redemption which had been promised; and thus had the people been educated who, whilst receiving the law, were to become thereby the blessing of all the families of the earth, like the anxiously looked-for torch, suddenly sent down to the hopeless miner, who vainly gropes his way to the lost entrance, amidst the appalling gloom which reigns in the bowels of the earth. Ay, this glorious light was kindled on yon Sinai, and this light of the unchanging God is to be the guide unto the heavenly portals of eternal bliss to the now benighted sons of men. And thus speaks the prophet (Malachi iii. 6):

כי אני ה׳ לא שניתי ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם :
מלאכי ג׳ ו׳ :

"For I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

In truth, the same Providence which watched over us when in slavery under Pharaoh's tyranny has ever since guarded us; and whenever troubles have encompassed us we were always saved by the same mighty Hand that piled up the waters of the Red Sea; and whenever enemies strove to make us forget the law, the same potent Voice that spoke at Sinai preserved its influence over our mind, so that the holy legacy has not been forgotten. If therefore our children and the sons of the stranger ask, "What is this service unto you?" we may answer, "It is because the Supreme Ruler fulfilled his word, and took unto himself a people from the midst of another, to diffuse through their agency, life, liberty, salvation and truth to the utmost ends of the earth on which our lot is cast."

Father of Israel! preserve us farther in thy grace, and look not unto our follies and transgressions, though they be many, but have regard unto the covenant Thou sworest unto our fathers, that Thou wouldst be God to them, and unto their children for ever. Amen.

Nissan 10th. } 5598.
April 5th. }

DISCOURSE III.

THE MISSION OF THE PROPHETS.

Lord of the universe! whose glory filleth all the earth, we come to adore Thee, because of the great truth and kindness which Thou hast ever displayed unto thy servants! How many were the dangers that threatened us in days gone by; but by thy gracious aid they were turned into salvations, and calamities which well-nigh had overwhelmed us, were made new evidences that Thine is the power to humble the proud and to exalt the lowly. Display then to us who worship Thee in our captivity the same grace and mercy which erst Thou bestowedst upon our ancestors; and let thus all the sons of man be made conscious that Thou alone art the God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, and that beside Thee there is no god! Amen.

Brethren!

Loudly pealed the thunder, and bright lightnings flashed amid the terrific clouds of gloom, when the Most High lowered his glory on the chosen mountain; violently shook the earth, and the skies dropped down water, when on Sinai the law was given; and at the footstool of Divine Majesty was prostrate an adoring people, lay worshipping an awe-struck nation, when their King came to cause them to hear his words. It was then that every one of the redeemed multitude

beheld the evident tokens of divine revelation, and heard the words of truth proceeding immediately from the mouth of the Holy One; and they felt that it was indeed the Almighty, their Creator and Redeemer, that had delivered them from the tyrant's power, who now spoke to them, and that to be his chosen people meant that they should purchase his especial favour and vigilance by obedience to the laws that were promulgated to them on that day.— In my last address, your attention was called to the extraordinary circumstance, (at least remarkable to Israelites, though so very common among gentiles,) that the heathen priesthood had a knowledge and religion, differing widely from that of the community. The former had access to the temples, festivals, and the so-called mysteries of their innumerable divinities; whilst the latter were excluded from all participation, except distantly, in these matters. A religious address is not well calculated to enter deeply into an investigation of this subject; but a mere cursory reading, even of the history of the Romans, Greeks, Babylonians, and Egyptians, will satisfy any one of the correctness of this assertion. I will merely extract from a late popular work, by no means favourable to revelation, a short description of the Eleusinian mysteries, to illustrate more clearly what I mean when using this word in reference to heathen rites. "These" (that is, the lesser mysteries) "were afterwards preparatory to the greater; for which the candidate was obliged to fit himself by religious ceremonies, symbolical rites, and various acts of devotion, the design of which was to withdraw his attention, at least for a time, from business and pleasure, to keep him pure,

chaste, and unpolluted, and to excite his curiosity in relation to the expected revelations. The period of purification continued a year; and no one could be admitted to the mysteries without purification, on pain of death. The ceremony of admission was performed by night: the candidates, crowned with myrtle, were obliged to wash their hands at the sacred threshold with holy water; public proclamation was also made, that the mysteries should be approached only with pure hands and pure hearts. Pure Greek only was to be spoken. The celebration of these mysteries commenced on the fifteenth day of the month Boedromion, and continued nine days. It consisted principally of representations of the history of Ceres and Proserpine, the tortures of Tartarus, and the joys of Elysium, which were exhibited in the most striking manner. The chief design was, by sensible means, to spread among the people a conviction of the immortality of the soul, and of a future state of rewards and punishments. The initiated were under the peculiar protection of the gods, and they alone were certain of the joys of immortality. Very different from these lesser were the greater mysteries, which contained the secret doctrines that were the chief object of the institution, and were communicated only to a few (the Epoptæ), in the recesses of the sanctuary. Secrecy was enjoined under the most dreadful penalties. Divine vengeance and death were the punishment of those who disclosed them. These doctrines probably aimed at the explanation of the popular superstition and mythology, and the interpretation of their true meaning. The mysteries inculcated the doctrine of one God, and the dignity

and destiny of the soul of man: they instructed the people in the knowledge of nature and of the universe, and pointed out the traces of the Deity in the beauty and majesty, the splendour and regularity of the visible world."

It will be observed that whatever of superstition and pagan worship belonged to these mysteries in this account are matters of history; but the explanations attempted, so as to attribute to them a higher object, such as unfolding the knowledge of one God and of the immortality of the soul, are evidently matters of conjecture only, and may be assumed to have been an illustration attempted in modern times. But it is not my present purpose to enter into a comparative value of paganism farther than to exhibit the nature of prophecy as it existed among the ancient Israelites, the predecessors of us the modern Jews.—You will have observed how carefully the higher knowledge was hedged round and kept concealed from the multitude of the heathen; so that, if even the elect had imparted to them a pure morality, the people had to be satisfied with gross superstition; no ray of purer light was to them vouchsafed. It need scarcely be mentioned that all this necessarily precluded the revelation to them of the existence of the Holy One, admitting even that the few elect knew of his sole existence; for the multitude worshipped in those days of darkness invented absurdities which were a personification of all the follies and vices of man in a barbarous state, and war and petty intrigue were boldly represented as the pastime of the Roman and other deities. Whatever of prophecy was attempted, in order to fasten yet tighter the chain of

servitude upon the necks of suffering millions, was delivered by cunning madmen in double-meaning words, interpreted by priests to answer their own, often sinister views. To attempt reaching the truth was held a crime deserving of the most condign visitation, and wo to him who dared to lift the veil of the Egyptian idol; death, or tortures even worse than death, would surely have fallen to his lot. While thus every communication of the Everlasting God was scrupulously denied, or kept a profound mystery to the mass of mankind: it pleased the Lord, whom Abraham and his descendants had worshipped, to announce through his chosen messenger that it was his intention to descend in visible glory, yet with no visible form, upon Mount Sinai, there to make known to all the people those laws which He had ordained for their government. It was, therefore, that the extraordinary display of the Divine Majesty took place which was mentioned in the commencement of this address, and from the midst of the fire, out of the bosom of the thunder that shook the lofty Horeb to its base, were proclaimed doctrines true as is the Creator himself; laws unchangeable as is his wisdom; and a code imperishable as is the spirit which He has created. Ay, "And all the people saw;" there is the great point on which we must reflect: it was not in some unheard of spot of a distant district, not in a corner of a remote, unknown, lonely desert, not before a few ignorant, perhaps interested men; but all the people stood by, in a position where every thing that was transacted was done in the sight and hearing of assembled millions, where the grandeur, sublimity, and transcendent awfulness precluded the

idea of human illusion and deception. Still the Israelites stood by unscathed, unharmed, alive, listening to the word of the Omnipotent. Truth was inculcated to the millions, superstition was overthrown, not to the chosen few in the recesses of a time-worn temple, but to a new-born people of sixty myriads besides women and children, and the strangers that were in the midst of them, on the green oasis, near the fertilizing rivulet, on the wide extent of the plains around the well-known Horeb. All this took place contrary to whatever had been thought of or at all events promulgated unto that day within the memory of men; and therefore did the Israelites say to Moses (Deut. v. 21): "Behold the Lord our God hath shown us his glory and his greatness, and his voice we have heard from the midst of the fire; this day we have seen that God can speak with man, who yet may live." Conviction was therefore wrought, a conviction which, despite of sinning, despite of apostacies innumerable, despite of persecutions bitter and agonizing, despite of allurements tempting and destructive, yet survives, that to God alone belongs the government, that He is the sole Creator, that He alone is Saviour, and that His commands are true, permanent and unchangeable.

The Unity then speaking was the same Saviour who had by a display of his creative power redeemed the children of his early adorer from galling servitude; and this Saviour who had redeemed their bodies from bondage was also the same Father who promised to redeem their souls from earthly pollution by their obeying his will. For what says the text of Exodus (xix. 5, 6)? "And now if you will hearken carefully

unto my voice, and observe my covenant, you shall be to me a treasure above all nations, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These words can bear but one interpretation, and this is evidently that God announced Himself as One, the Creator and Governor; and farthermore, that holiness, or the saving of the spirit from pollution and its consequent condemnation and unhappiness, could be acquired by a hearkening to his voice, and an observance of his covenant; no other terms, no other faith, no other conditions were stipulated: where then, why then, should we look for conditions which the words of the holy message do not require?—But what is meant by covenant? The covenant of circumcision had already been given to Abraham, in consequence of which observance the Israelites had been chosen as the people to whom God would fulfil the promise made to that Patriarch, that He would be their God; and now to add to this covenant already existing, they were told the duties which they should observe in order to lay a claim to the appellation of "God's people;" that is to say, they should observe the covenant of the Ten Commandments, or those laws which the Almighty had ordained as the everlasting statutes which should govern the people whom He had chosen. The only article of belief, from which our creed so called is merely a fair deduction, which was asked of them, is a belief in the existence of God, the Omnipotent One, the Everlasting One who had delivered them from Egyptian thraldom; but in no way was it taught that they should repose their hope of salvation upon the intervention of any assistant, human or divine. For

human beings must like themselves be fallible, mortal, sinful; and no divinity can exist either dependent or independent of Him who is our God. Thus instructed, thus convinced, the people felt that the living God, let me repeat, the living God their Redeemer, had indeed spoken to them from the midst of the fire, and that naught but his terrors had been seen from the midst of the darkness. And yet they had been permitted to survive! How were the delusions of paganism thus swept away! how were the bonds of priestcraft rent in twain by the Giver of light and reason! The object of the descent of Sinai was thus attained, and thus was accomplished the intention of the Lord to reveal to an adoring people the basis of his everlasting covenant.

Although the people had in this manner been taught that a man might hear the living God speak, and yet be preserved alive: still weak human nature dreaded to approach again the great fire in which the glory shone resplendent. They were fully alive to the truth and faithfulness of Moses, through whose instrumentality they had been redeemed, upheld, and, so to say, been brought to adore at the footstool of the great Father. They therefore continued: "And now why shall we die? for this great fire may consume us; if we continue to hear any more the voice of the Lord our God, we must die. For where is there any flesh who hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have done, and hath remained alive? Do thou now approach, and hear all that the Lord our God may say; and thou shalt speak unto us all that the Lord our God may speak unto thee, and we will hear and do

it." (Deut. v. 22–24.) This request was not unpleasing to God; He, on the contrary, deputed Moses on his part likewise to be the messenger to the people, and thus was the son of Amram made, as it were, the representative of the people before the Lord of all, and unto them he was the mediator for the communication of the commandments with which he was charged; and in this manner was the law of Moses handed down to us, a law which is the sequel and more particular definition of the basis of the covenant, the Ten Commandments, which all Israel heard on Horeb.

When Moses now was told that his end was approaching, that soon his body too must be yielded to the earth, that though in his full vigour at the age of sixscore years, with his eyesight undimmed, and his intellect unclouded, his hours were numbered, and that notwithstanding his earnest entreaty to see the goodly land which was on the west side of Jordan, he should die in the land of Moab, because he had not sanctified the Lord at the waters of Meribah: he prayed to God to appoint a man over the congregation who should supply the place which he under heavenly favour had filled for the long period of forty years. His wish was gratified, and Joshua his disciple was endowed with the divine spirit, and guided by holy wisdom he led on the Israelites to the conquest and the possession of the land of Canaan. But in addition to this the people were promised, that with the death of this one even the gift of prophecy should not be withdrawn; but that from time to time teachers should be sent who should speak in the name

of the living God and the everlasting King. This we are taught in Deut. xviii. 15:

נביא מקרבך מאחיך כמני יקים לך ה׳ אלהיך אליו תשמעון : דברים יח׳ טו׳ :

"A prophet from the midst of thee, from thy brethren, like unto myself, the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee: unto him you shall hearken."

Let us understand well what was promised, for upon this depends much, and it is necessary that we should be able to show that this announcement refers to no other character than a human prophet. In the first place, a prophet is a term inappropriate to the Divinity; for who can depute Him? in whose name is He to speak? who is the superior to whom He shall be accountable? Farther, "from the midst of thee" refers evidently to a human being, one like the people, fallible, mortal, sinful; more upright, more devoted to the service of God, if you will, but nevertheless, fallible, mortal, sinful. Again, "from thy brethren;" who can be the personage meant, if it be not one from the seed of Jacob? who else can be the brother of Israelites, if it be not one of the same origin? But the next characteristic, "like unto myself," must banish every doubt, if any can rest on the mind of correctly informed and correctly thinking Israelites. Who was Moses? was he an integral part of the Divinity? was he a person removed from the rest of the world, in an exemption from sorrow, from error, from death? did he act of his own accord, in working the mighty deeds of which he was the instrument, from an inherent power, or as the delegate

for the time being from the One Supreme? Next, for what object were the miracles performed? to aggrandize one? to depress another? no; only to confirm again and again the minds of the wavering multitude in the observance of the promulgated covenant, in short, to establish on a permanent basis the service of the Lord of all. We may maintain farther that not to atone, not to save, not to reconcile a sinning world to an offended God was Moses deputed; only to be the mouth-piece of the Lord, and to distribute, to use a simile from outward nature, as a canal enriches, from the supply of the parent river, with refreshing waters the thirsty soil, the benefits with which he was charged to the people to whom he had been sent, and ultimately through these to all the sons of Adam. This then was Moses, this his office, this his prophecy. When, therefore, God promises one like him, a prophet descended from Jacob, He means not a saviour, descended maternally from Israel, whilst his father was more than man, sent to atone for the transgressions of Adam's sinful race; not one through whose blood shed for mankind they could alone be rendered worthy of paradise; but a messenger of tidings of good or evil, one deputed like Moses was to speak in the name of his Sender, to demonstrate the truth of the unalterable law, the unchangeable decree of our Lord,—in short, to instruct, to lead, to admonish, to labour in the holy calling with the zeal becoming one so eminently favoured, in order that his brethren might turn, repent, and regain the favour of their offended God, and to obtain again through obedience the happiness which their sins have taken from them. And continues the

text: "All as thou didst ask from the Lord thy God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, I do not wish any more to hear the voice of the Lord my God, nor see again this great fire, lest I die." (Deut. xviii. 16.) The people had asked that Moses should communicate to them the decrees which might be revealed to him, to instruct them in the way they ought to go; but they did not ask, they did not think it requisite to ask that he should become their surety to obtain for them salvation; inasmuch as the very law itself was the instrument to effect this; because this was the sole object of its promulgation, as we are told in the words of Scripture: "That it may be well with them and their children for ever." (Ibid. v. 26.) Indeed, for what other purpose was or could the great display have been, were it not to bestow a law, the observance of which should confer life and peace? When therefore God promises a prophet on their petition and that of the father of prophets, He evidently could mean no other than had been asked for, a deputy to certify them of the will of the Lord, not a son of god, to use a phrase foreign to revealed religion, to atone with his death, inflicted by the people of his mother, for the sin of Adam, and to render man again fitted for admission to a share of everlasting happiness.

I have deemed it necessary to be more diffuse than customary upon the explanation of a text in the Pentateuch and to illustrate it at greater length, even by an introduction of extraneous matter, than is perhaps agreeable to you or than I have been in the habit of doing hitherto. But observe, brethren, our religion is always assailed, by infidels on the one side, who

would gladly destroy all belief, and by zealots of another people on the other, who wish, and endeavour to impose a creed upon us, foreign to our faith, and not consonant with the Bible. I therefore consider it my duty to show you as briefly as one lecture can do it, the infinite inferiority of the pagan knowledge of God, even assuming for it the highest tone which unbelievers ascribe to it; and then to prove on the other hand, that the opinions of the people among whom we live are inconsistent with, and therefore repugnant to the wisdom and goodness of God. Not however to controvert the belief of others or to make converts to our mode of thinking has this been attempted, but only to afford those who may hear me, and whose hearts I trust the Lord will fill with wisdom to understand and to instruct, some arguments which on their face appear unanswerable, to contend with those who may wish to invite them to rebel against the Most High. Yes, rebellion is the word to denote the act which we are called upon to accomplish; we are told to forsake the Rock of ages for a deity which our forefathers knew not, of whom the Bible does not speak, to whom the law and commandments do not even allude. Shall we yield, brethren? are we to be wheedled out of our hope? shall it be said, that we have surrendered up in times of repose, and liberty, and enlightenment, and equality, that to which we clung, ay, clung unto death, when persecution, when hatred, when oppression, when chains, the rack, the scaffold were the certain doom of the people held forsaken of God and afflicted? Or are perhaps the arguments now adduced stronger or more cogent when held out flatteringly, than when preached with

the fire and sword? By no means; the law of God as delivered to Moses, free from human admixture, stands as erect at this moment as on the day of the assembly at Horeb. You, Israelites! are its guardians; you, sons of Jacob! are its sentinels; it is your inheritance; guard it, watch it, save it; hold fast to its blessings, and never throw idly by the gift which to bestow God, your Creator, came down in his glory followed by multitudes of his holy angels, to bless therewith the people whom He had chosen. Holy are its statutes, purify yourselves through them; life-bringing are its precepts, live then by obeying them; instructive are its ordinances, become wise therefore by studying them. Yes, live in and for your faith, and everlasting life will be your reward; be erect in your captivity, unflinching as the defenders of Heaven's best gift, and the glory of Israel which is dimmed will shine again; and when misfortunes befall you then, as misfortunes are the trials which God wields for the purification of nations as well as individuals, Israelites will truly appear the people of God, who in Palestine and in foreign lands remained firm and true and devoted servants of Him who chose them because of the love He bore to their fathers. Thus also will be fulfilled the prophecy which was spoken by Isaiah (lii. 10): "The Lord hath bared his holy arm before the eyes of all nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

Father above! give us thy blessing, grant us the light of thy countenance, and give us peace and security in the lands of our captivity. Raise up also again unto us prophets who shall teach us in thy name, and pour out thy holy spirit over all flesh, as Thou hast prom-

ised; when all nations will acknowledge that for our sins we were punished, and that by thy favour we have been redeemed. Amen.

Elul 2d.
Aug. 23d. } 5598.

DISCOURSE IV.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND REPENTANCE.

O Thou! who hearest prayer, to whom the sincere offering of a contrite spirit is sweet savour, who pardonest the sinners and forgivest transgressors against thy holy will, when they in repentance return and seek thy presence: do now hear our supplication, and have regard to the outpourings of the heart which ascend to thy throne from the thousands of assemblies of Israel in all the places of their dispersion! Wash them clean from their iniquity, cleanse them from their sins, that they may be made whiter than the snow. And write them and seal them unto life and happiness amidst the righteous who are thy beloved, and remove from them all sorrow and affliction; that they may live devoted to thy service, and regain by serving Thee thy favour of which their sins have deprived them. May this be thy will, now and forever! Amen.

Brethren!

Could we but at all times know the consequences of our contemplated actions, could we be permitted

to dive into the recesses of futurity: how often would we hesitate before we acted, and would leave many an intended action undone. For we frequently do that which in its consequences is pernicious not only to others whom we sought to injure, but also to ourselves, when we only thought of being benefitted by our conduct. Appearances are so well calculated to mislead, excitement is so apt to blind, interest will so generally deceive, that guided by these only our whole life would be nothing but one continued scene of rashness, its consequent misconduct, and subsequent regret and sorrow.—The wisest of men like the most foolish is liable to the same infirmities, and if he is left to judge for himself, he must, acting in ignorance of the consequences, very often, nay, almost uniformly, choose the evil, deceived by the semblance it may bear to the useful. For great, wonderful, and far-reaching as is the mind with which God has blessed his creature, man, still it is but the field in which the seed may be sown; and good or evil fruits will be the product according to the cultivation which the fruitful soil has received. But how does the agriculturist cultivate his soil? He first endeavours to enrich it by mixing it with substances which bountiful nature every where supplies to restore its lost vigour; he next ploughs in order that the loose furrows may be ready to receive the seed which he intrusts to the bosom of the earth; and when the germ first appears he watches with care lest the chill frost and the gust of the storm nip the tender shoot; and even when it is growing up to maturity he must carefully remove all weeds and noxious undergrowth which, when suffered to multiply, would injure the development of

the plant by their hurtful presence. All this done, he must leave the ripening to the careful vigilance of Him above, who sendeth down the rain to refresh the earth and the warming rays of the sun to bring all to maturity. Even so, brethren, should we strive to cultivate our minds, and endeavour to reap a rich and blissful harvest from the field of mental cultivation surrendered to our charge. You must understand that in our natural state the mind is liable to receive impressions of every kind, and it may often be said that a wicked man might have been a good one, had he only trained himself or been trained by his parents and guardians in a different manner. It evidently becomes therefore the duty of the superintendents of children to go before them with a holy example, in order that they may early behold the beautiful effects of piety and uprightness; children will soon see how happy this renders their parents, and naturally enough they will seek to reach the same state by emulating those they love, and from whose kind care so many of their enjoyments spring, and who generously provide for all their wants. When the child is thus prepared, how easy is it to awaken in him feelings of gratitude (so to say plough in him the field for religious seed) towards the great Giver, who has enabled his bodily parents to be kind and beneficent to him! Yes, he should be told how it is that all the beauty of nature is beautiful through Him alone; how He makes the bright sun to shine; how He clothes with verdure, how He adorns with flowers, how He blesses with fruit the field, the meadow, and the garden. That every bird that sings amidst the new-clad branches of spring, sings by Him

inspired; how the cattle that low, the sheep that skip in exuberant joy on the widespread meadows, are there by His ordaining. Tell him when the dew-drop glows in the early rays of the rising sun, that this resplendent diamond and this matchless brightness are scattered from the hollow of his hand in one night over all the earth; yes, fill his heart with the vastness of the Creator's might; tell him that the bright luminary which lights us by day never halts in his course, that scarce have his beams sunk to rest apparently behind the lofty mountain, when from the summit you see them illumining the land beyond. Tell him —but what needs it for an humble mortal to recount the greatness and awful working of his Maker? can we reach the extent of his power? Still it is by words only that the sensations of our hearts can be conveyed to others; and when therefore the greatness of the Everlasting One is the theme, how does the heart swell, how do words come involuntarily, how does our soul heave forth the psalm, and strive feebly to confess its inability to chant his praise! Let therefore the child see that you are indeed alive to the wonders of the Creator's deeds, and you will awaken in his youthful heart an ardent wish to love this great and bountiful Benefactor, and he will almost involuntarily ask, how he should act to deserve the love of the great Adored. When the child has reached this point, that he requests either to be taught, or appears ready to receive higher instruction, you should inform him that the Creator is too elevated, too supremely blessed to require the services of his creatures for his own benefit; but that whatever they do will be for their own advantage solely, if their

conduct meets with His approbation. Be explicit in this, let the child be at once impressed that his piety will be pleasing but not serviceable to God; that the performance of duty was therefore given, that every human being might at once know those actions which must be beneficial in their consequences, be this sooner or later, to him and others, and learn to avoid those that are hurtful, if even their first appearance be harmless or at times agreeable. Thus also says the prophet (Ezekiel xx. 11, 12): "And I gave them my statutes, and my judgments I made known to them, which a man is to do and live through them; and also my Sabbaths I gave unto them, that they might be a sign between me and between them; that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifieth them." Let him understand well what is meant by "which a man is to do and live through them;" that it is nothing else but that a strict obedience to the divine behests will give us inward comfort, outward peace, and permanent satisfaction; and that, if we have to conquer our inclination in order to render obedience to the judgments of God; if we have to undergo hardships; if we have to be subject to loss; if we should be exposed to the contempt and hatred of the ungodly in order to follow the way pointed out by the statutes of the Lord, we should not falter in our duty, but remain firm and unshaken; resist the inclination, for to follow it would be sinful and death-bringing; and think lightly of hardships, for they may be readily overcome by perseverance. Show him that the loss of worldly things should not be estimated in comparison with the bliss we obtain by obedience; the contempt of mortals should not be

valued when compared with the favour of our great Father; and the hatred of the ungodly may well be held in light esteem, when we reflect that we are protected by One who is powerful above those who lord it over their fellows. Tell him farther, that this course of steady obedience will bring us life, and that the opposite will cause death and sufferings.

Unfold to the child also the beautiful institution of the Sabbath; how the Lord himself made all that exists in specific time, and that, when all was finished as He had willed it, He sanctified that period and called it the day of rest; that He could have made all in a moment of time, but preferred creating, as the Bible teaches, each part of the organization on a different day, but that He absolutely finished, and consequently added no more, when He had organized nature as we now see it around us.—He had implanted in every thing a power of continuing itself, if not disturbed by greater causes; to the earth he gave power to change its masses by heat and various other inherent agents; to the water, to rise up in vapour into the atmosphere and thence to descend and make fruitful the soil; to plants He gave growth, and to animals the power of motion, and to man alone the faculty of speech.—All this organization finished, He viewed it and found it very good, and He then abstained from adding any more agents and impulses; and from that time until now every thing has been proceeding and progressing as He had commanded; and that period too, when all had been finished, called the seventh day of creation, He blessed and declared holy, and gave it to his noblest work, man, as a day of abstinence from labour, and a day of recreation from

toil, and devoted to the worship of the Founder of the universe; for thereon the sun rose upon the new-made earth, when quietly the fishes played in the sparkling brook, unterrified by the angler's rod; whilst securely the birds carolled forth their Sabbath hymn in undisturbed joy; whilst peacefully grazed the cattle upon the fresh grass of the wide-extended pasture, and whilst man, innocent as he had sprung from God's creative hand, chanted forth his ecstatic praise to the Author of his life. Angels might stand by and be thankful at so great a display of goodness; for there were rest, and harmony, and good-will upon the whole sphere which had just been thrown out as one of the many stars that glow in the expanse of the infinite space, the handiwork of the exalted One. Therefore was the Sabbath given as an institution to prove that God the Creator sanctifieth his children by making known unto them a portion of his greatness, and imparting to them a knowledge of those things which will make them worthy to be called his servants, and men hallowed by his worship.

If you yourselves, parents and guardians! worship the Lord in your hearts; if you practise in your own persons the duties you recommend; if you honour the Sabbath from violating it; if, in short, your children see in your conduct the reflection of the divine law, whose precepts you impress on them: is it not then highly probable that they will listen with cheerful attention to your instruction, and give ready obedience to the laws you impart? Most assuredly, and children thus educated, thus led by precept and example, will be full of the spirit of religion, ready to execute from a pure love to Heaven his all-wise de-

crees. For in youthful piety there is not mixed up a desire for display, no love of renown, no fondness for worldly gains, which may in a greater or less degree sway the actions of maturer years; but the infantile prayer spoken by intelligent lips that know no guile is indeed a worthy sacrifice to the One who is purest of the pure. And well have our wise men included in our prayers the petition, "Grant our request for the sake of children under tuition;" for with them is found sincere piety coupled with understanding, and from them alone can grow up undeviating defenders of the holy law; since they early practise the religion which has been early taught them, and conviction of its truth implanted in the pure soil of uncontaminated reason will remain unshaken in after years, when the turmoil of life, and passion, and sorrow, and disappointment sour perhaps the disposition, and almost lead man to despair of better days. What, I ask you, will then uphold the stranger in the stranger's land? who alone battles against adverse interests? mistrusted by his opponents and feebly supported by his friends? whence can he derive his consolation? Can it be from evanescent triumphs, from foes vanquished, from difficulties overcome, from a character left untarnished though assailed by the ungodly? Surely to the humble in mind such things can afford but small satisfaction; he values little the malice of men, and lightly he esteems the temporary triumph obtained; and were indeed such his only support, how soon would he sink into melancholy and listlessness. And suppose his enemies were to triumph (for often we find that virtue for a time succumbs to malice and cunning), what then is to cheer him but the holy

hope which has been early implanted in him, by an honoured mother, by a beloved father, by a revered teacher? And often the shadow of an early-lost mother will rise up to console the son in the hour of sorrow and bid him to direct his eye to his God who never sleeps: the admonition of the father, who was perchance early taken, will recur to the aching memory and counsel him to steadfastness in the righteous path; and the instruction of the teacher, who has sunk in the grave ripe of years and full of honours, will be ever present to incite him to persevere in the service of the Most High, uninfluenced by fear of the world, unswayed by the hope of their favour.—If you, brethren, are of those who have been blessed with such guides as I have mentioned, you will be able to estimate the valuable gifts that have descended unto you through them; and you will surely not hesitate to endeavour that your own children shall receive a similar blessing through your means.—In this manner you accomplish the high obligation which the Lord demands of you with regard to the precious souls which His wisdom has intrusted to your care, for in this light you should regard your children, as a trust which you should strive to deliver back pure and unsullied into the hands of Him who bestowed them on you.—It is accordingly farther demanded of you to watch the growth of the weeds among the useful products, and to eradicate the former that the latter may grow more freely and luxuriantly. In other words, you should keep a watchful eye to discover with every day of advance in life the faults and foibles which your children may display; do not compare your well-informed and well-behaved ones with those of others

who are rude and bad, and thereby extenuate the little evils which you may daily witness in your own families. Do not act in this suicidal manner; but check every evil propensity as soon as it presents itself; punish gently every departure from right and propriety, and admonish with earnestness, and repeat your holy lessons constantly in mild and persuasive language, till you reach that happy moment when the conduct and thoughts of your offspring and charges flow in the same devotional channel with your own.

If all this has been religiously, scrupulously, and honestly done, till they have reached manhood; if virtue has always been encouraged and vice ever checked; if the fear of God has been made a household duty, and his adoration the daily conduct of the seniors; in short, if the parental fireside has been the school of religion: then alone have you fulfilled your trust, and then alone can you with truth assert that you have discharged your duty to your children, and then alone can you aver that you are not answerable for their misconduct. If then they disgrace themselves by deeds unworthy of the example and instruction they have received, you will not be punished, nor will the displeasure of God fall upon you; as says the prophet (Ezekiel xviii. 20): "The soul that sinneth alone shall die; the son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor shall the father suffer for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." It will appear from this that, when the son acts contrary to the virtuous example of the father, the latter shall not be responsible; but this exemption from blame can only then

be claimed, when the commandment of "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" has been carefully fulfilled. But wo to that parent who values his children more than the glory of God! who reproves them not when they sin; for then he is accountable for all their transgressions, since he could have guided them aright, and yet neglected his trust. For thus we read in 1 Samuel iii. 11–14: "And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold I will do a thing in Israel, so that both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. On that day I will fulfil unto Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, when I begin, and also make an end. I now tell him, that I will judge his house for ever, because of the iniquity of his knowing that his sons behaved vilely and he chid them not." We are told in the same book how lamentable was the end of Eli's sons and of himself, and how just was the retribution inflicted upon the priests who dishonoured by their misconduct the temple and sacrifices of the Lord, and of the father who from love to them winked at their misdeeds.

We have thus exhibited both the duty and manner of mental culture; and minds trained in this manner can alone be said to be in a proper state for adopting a good and useful conduct. For a person who has been early taught to look towards the law of God for advice and countenance; who has been firmly impressed that all its commandments are wise and of beneficial tendency; who firmly believes that the Maker does all for our ultimate good, even in those things which we mourn over at times as afflictions and sorrows: such a one, I say, can seldom be induced to do aught hurtful to himself or his neigh-

bours, that is to say, he will practise virtue, and thus do nothing which can in reality be termed injurious. For if he deprives himself of superfluities in order to assist those who need his services, what does he lose thereby? If he voluntarily submits to suspend his labour on the days sacred to the Lord, will he at the period of his death miss the unnecessary gain which he lost by his abstinence, even admitting that his wealth should have been diminished in consequence of his piety? Say, what can he suffer if he watches by the friend who languishes on the bed of sickness, compared to the blissful satisfaction he thereby earns of having assisted one who so much needed it, even omitting altogether its bearing as a religious duty? In short, we cannot mention a single deprivation, which the strict obedience to the law requires, which can in any degree of fairness be termed hurtful, and the more we reflect, the more sincerely must we join with the words of the prophet adduced already, "And my judgments I made known to them, which a man is to do and live through them;" for all the losses and sufferings such obedience brings are only temporary, and the mind, though at first unwilling, will soon rejoice over the sacrifice made, over inclinations conquered, and over evil intentions checked in consonance with the will of God, and feel a happiness which no worldly gain can bestow, that it has been blessed to avoid a long course of regret, and to earn the satisfaction of a conscience unsullied by crime, and to be confident that the Creator will look with favour upon the deeds of the work of his hands.

But wo! when the decrees of Heaven are esteemed

of no weight in the regulation of our conduct! if we trust to the deceptions which the outward world imposes upon the senses; if we prefer riches to happiness; inclinations before the law of God, the creature before the Creator. For then the road which leads onward to destruction is opened to us; every act will then withdraw us to a greater distance from the favour of the Lord; every step will bring us nearer to the brink of ruin; since the accumulation of wealth by means not permitted by the law, the acquisition of fame by trampling upon the rights of others, cannot shield the heart from the consciousness of being unworthy of such possessions, nor can we rest free from the apprehension of divine vengeance, if even human power can be laughed to scorn. Or say that empires too should bend beneath a sceptre unjustly swayed, that kings should bow before a usurper's throne, that nations glorying once in their freedom should willingly bear the chains of fortune's favourite —will this bring ease to the soul torn with remorse for friendship betrayed, for the innocent slaughtered, for the widowed mother rendered childless, and for altars of God overthrown? Yes! dignify crime as you will, let its career be ever so splendid: still you may confidently assert, that had the criminal but known the end of his doings, had he been permitted to look into the dark recess of futurity, surely his misdeeds would never have been done. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," speaks Isaiah (lvii. 21); and from the prisoner who in his lonely cell is shut out from all intercourse with men, up to the tyrant who tosses about, uneasy on a bed of down, surrounded by fawning courtiers, all have experienced

and all will experience to the end of time, that virtue outraged will be avenged, and that the broken covenant of the Lord will cry out for visitation against the doers of evil.

Still, even the sinner, though he has wilfully rejected the light so graciously given, will not be for ever rejected, if he but turn again and seek the Lord, —by which is meant that the sinner, who in his misconduct may be said to have distanced himself from his God, may alter his course, and by following the divine ordinances regain the favour which is now denied him. He should rekindle in himself the knowledge of better things which was impressed on him in his happier years of infancy and youth; he should strictly investigate whether his own deeds can bear a comparison with that standard; and if he find that they cannot, as find he must, when he feels that he must stand abashed if at that moment he were called on to account before the omniscient Judge: let him pour out his heart in prayer before Him who searches the heart, and humiliate himself in abhorrence of the wickedness he has done. Then indeed may he look for forgiveness, if he sincerely resolves and firmly perseveres to lay aside the faults, and vices, and sins which rob him of his peace, which but too much evidence that he is not entire with God. Only let him not despair of mercy; let him not think that the religion of Israel revealed in the law of Moses has no consolation for the transgressor; for reasoning like this may sink the straying one yet farther into the whirlpool of sin, and extinguish perhaps the last spark of religion, and induce him to become an apostate to his faith and the belief of his fathers, and to seek for

repose in systems which promise salvation through mediators, or in other words an atonement through acts that are not his own. On the contrary we thus read in Deuteronomy (iv. 29):

ובקשתם משם את ה׳ אלהיך ומצאת כי תדרשנו
בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך : דברים ד׳ כט׳ :

"And you will seek from there the Lord thy God, and thou shalt find him, when thou wilt seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul."

In this verse is plainly taught that a seeking of the Lord will obtain his forgiveness, provided the penitence be with all the heart and with all the soul, that is to say, with entire sincerity on the part of the sinner. It is true that Moses in addressing Israel evidently speaks of the entire people; but we are fairly permitted to apply the same promises of pardon to individuals likewise. Many passages of the prophets teach us emphatically the use and efficacy of repentance; but we must at present pass them over, and merely select a few striking passages from the Psalms of David which clearly teach the doctrine we have advanced. Psalm xxxvi. 5, he says: "Therefore did I confess my sins to Thee, and would not hide my iniquity; I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou didst forgive the iniquity of my sin." Psalm li, 6: "To Thee, only Thee, have I sinned, and have done the evil in Thy sight." And v. 19, he continues in positive assurance of pardon: "The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a heart broken and contrite, O God! Thou wilt not despise."

—This is the doctrine which is preached throughout the Bible, and in every instance we are told that sincerity will not find the gates of mercy closed to its earnest prayer. Indeed it is the whole scope of religion to awaken such a state of mind in our people; all the ceremonies were ordained to arrest the attention and to lead back the unthinking, and even the unlearned who have not been blessed with an education as we have attempted to describe, unto the service of the Most High. Hence, the institution of the festivals, and especially of the Day of Atonement, and the days of penitence. Every year the cornet is blown in Israel's dwellings, to proclaim that the everlasting King yet reigneth, and to call back to his fold those who have gone astray on devious paths. Loudly arises the prayer, sincerely ascends the hymn, and in every congregation is heard with one accord, "The Lord He is God, the Lord He is God!" Willing and unwilling, pious and sinner, all join in the loud acclaim, and all attest that the love of God is not yet extinct in Jacob's descendants in the lands of their captivity. But brethren, let the worship not be merely for the day, for the moment of enthusiasm; on the contrary, let its workings operate for every hour of your future life; be animated by a renewed desire to be good and faithful servants, and resolve to show your sincerity by a vigilant and honest exercise of all the precepts which were ordained for your happiness; then indeed will you be accepted, your sins will be forgiven, and you will not die, O house of Israel!

Forgiver of sins! gracious Father! send us the comforter, even thy spirit, and pour out over us the spirit of truth and righteousness, and open for us the

gates of pardon and forgiveness; and ordain our portion, and the portion of all Israel with the righteous who have done thy will. Amen.

Elul 29th. } 5598.
Sept. 19th. }

DISCOURSE V.

OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW.

FATHER of Israel! unto Thee alone we offer adoration, Thou who hast been from the beginning, and who wilt endure to everlasting. Thine are power and wisdom; thine are might and understanding; and from Thee alone are the powerful strong, and the wise endowed with wisdom. Give us therefore the protection of thy power that we may be safe and sheltered from the attacks and snares of the ungodly; and grant us the light of thy wisdom so that we may be wise in knowing Thee, and bow with meek submission to thy just decrees, and the upright judgments which Thou sendest over thy world. Amen.

BRETHREN!

In examining the law of God we find different words used to denote the commandments which it contains. So one class is called commandments, another judgments, another laws, and another again has the name

of statutes. These various terms are not unadvisedly used, nor without proper limitations. So we would understand under commandments those enactments which are apparent to our reason, including the greater part of those technically called the moral laws; necessity and convenience both demand our acting accordingly, and human reason, when once certified of their being the will of God, will, if not too much misguided by passion, gladly acquiesce in gaining the favour of the Lord by following their behests strictly, seeing that in obeying God in these things we at the same time promote our own interest. The same, with but slight variation, may be said of the judgments so called, or the judicial law of Israel, as practised when the nation of united Hebrews was governed by the equitable code of the divine rule. To our own reason a close inspection will make manifest that they are based upon the golden rule, "Do to others as you would have them act towards you;" and but few indeed among these enactments can be found, the reasonableness of which is not apparent, if the circumstances of the times and of our people are taken into consideration, and which are not even to this day the best adapted for the happy government of a free and enlightened people. For the more the enactments of the Mosaic code are studied and carried out in practice, the more it will be discovered, that no legislation, properly so called, of equal soundness and practical usefulness, was ever devised by any one man, or any set of men, be they the wisest that ever lived.

In the execution therefore of the *commandments* and *judgments* no particular exercise of faith can be dis-

played, by which I mean that in performing either the moral or judicial laws we do not manifest a submission of our own will to the wisdom of God. But still, whilst practising what our reason demands, we are nevertheless doing our duty, we obey the dictates of our supreme Legislator who is anxious to promote by his benign law the welfare of his creatures. He is desirous to establish peace and good-will on earth; and whatever therefore we do with a holy purpose will be acceptable to Him as a manifestation of piety. But religion has a higher scope than a mere utilitarian principle; it is the schooling of the heart, it is the training of the spirit, it is the government of our desires which it purposes; in short, it does teach us to yield ourselves entirely to God's guidance; and it is a saving faith and a confiding trust that are necessary in order to constitute ourselves servants of the Most High. What then is a saving faith? is it a belief in doctrines not understood? in imperfectly conveyed dogmas? No, it is a conviction that whatever God asks of us is correct and true; that his laws are necessary to our salvation and happiness, both here and hereafter. It was therefore to test our faith, to plant the love of God stronger in our hearts, that He gave us statutes and laws which human reason would not have arrived at by the most profound study, that we might be tested whether we "loved the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul." It is accordingly not to be denied, that many of the statutes of the Mosaic code are not founded upon *human* reason; nor will we for a moment maintain that it is expedient even to attempt measuring the infinite Wisdom by the feeble light vouchsafed to mortals such

as we are; but we maintain that in this consists the chief excellence of the Mosaic rule over any other which is the invention of men and based solely upon human reason and human will.

Let us examine: the statutes and laws are those ordinances which God instituted as the distinguishing mark of his people above all other nations of the earth. He ordained that we should erect a sanctuary, holy unto his service, where He would come and dwell among us. The regulations belonging thereto, the order of the service, the institution of the sacrifices, the consecration of the priests and Levites, were all such as He chose to appoint them. When therefore He says, that such service would be a delight, that such sacrifices would be a sweet savour, where is the human reason that can gainsay it? Say we, that we would not so have organized the holy service; admit, that more pictorial, more statuary effect, more elegant, ravishing music salute the eye and ear in other worships; that in other temples sweeter incense pleases the senses: yet all this and even greater refinements superadded would convince the believer yet more that a holy purpose was the foundation of the simple unostentatious service of the Lord. He preferred to dwell in a tabernacle, elegantly indeed constructed—beautifully wrought by those in whose hearts God had placed wisdom; nevertheless it was a movable, so to say itinerant sanctuary, and during a space of four hundred and eighty years our people had no other resting-place for the glory of the Sovereign of the universe, whose visible fire dwelt in the midst of them. Would human wisdom have ordained this? can any one be hardy enough to assert, that a cun-

ning deceiver would not have dreaded to trust his system to so contemptible a depository in a country replete with refinement and elegance? By no means, especially when Egypt teemed with temples of yet enduring splendour, when there at every step the modern traveller is arrested by magnificence and wonderful art which no one can even dare to attempt to imitate, much less to rival. We therefore maintain that in obeying the laws of which we have been speaking, we submit ourselves to the wisdom and guidance of God, who chose to maintain his creed and faith among our nation in a state of simplicity almost inconceivable, while heathenism fell, though supported by unequalled splendour.

Again with regard to statutes.—"Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy" is the command of the law; here we behold God as the Author of our life, as the Rewarder of our toil, demanding a cessation of labour on the day which He claims as devoted to his service. He tells us, blessing, yes, temporary blessing, the increase of riches and worldly goods, also, shall be the consequence of our labouring less days than the gentiles do. Would human reason have invented this? or did it ever do so in any other system? True, the Romans had the feast of the Saturnalia, when the slaves were free from labour, and when a universal merry-making prevailed throughout the land; but it was not the quiet Sabbath of the Jews, not the silent hilarity, the finding pleasure in the Lord prevailing among Israel. With us labour ceased before the sun sunk to rest on the sixth day of every week. See on the western horizon the light of day is fast winging its course to the depth of ocean's wastes; from the

pastures the lowing herds wend their way to the welcome inclosure; the sheep bleating and joyous seek the fold; and the ploughman arrests the busy plough; the harvester's sickle is swung no more, and stops the hand of the active vinedresser. All is at rest, whilst yet the feathered songsters have not ceased their song, whilst yet they have not sought their downy nest. Say, what causes this repose? is the labourer's hand palsied? falters the husbandman in his toil? is it sloth that pervades the land? No! hear the psalm arising, from towns, from villages, from hamlets, from the desert plain; all join in melodious hymns, all hearts are overflowing, every tongue utters praise, shouting forth "a psalm and song for the Sabbath day." The household too is newly arranged, the table decked with the bright linen, the work of the industrious housewife, who awaits the return of the father, husband, and son; and over the festive board the Lord's name is blessed who has given rest to his people Israel. At length all is gloom; the sun has set, the night has spread its dusky mantle over wearied creation; but no sound of revelry, no clanging of instruments, no noisy shouts disturb the peaceful ear; for the bondman, though now free, rejoices too with the household in quiet retirement over the return of the weekly rest.—The day has now dawned; and over hill and valley slowly the light is stealing; but it meets not the ox at the plough, nor the ass toiling under his burden; no armour clashes; the forge sends not forth the curling smoke; and not is heard as wont the hammer of the artisan; but unto the places where the law is proclaimed all the people go, and listen to the instruction which has been vouchsafed

them, and they learn each to value himself, not in being richer, wiser, or more powerful than his neighbour, but in obtaining a greater share of the fear and knowledge of the Lord, the Father and King of his people. So it is in all the land; quiet, and order, and peace, and tranquillity reign all around; but even in the temple the service is simpler than in other days of the week; not to-day do you behold crowds of people bringing their burnt-offerings, their peace, their sin, and their trespass-offering to the house of God; for only the daily sacrifices and the additional offering of two lambs for the Sabbath are led to the altar, and over the sanctuary as over all the land hangs the shield of the holy rest—a rest in which no heathens rejoice, a Sabbath in which the uncircumcised have no share, nor portion. Is this an institution of human invention? or did priestly cunning devise the day of rest? No! it is the wisdom of God that has ordained it, it is the all-wise Ruler who wishes so to refresh by bodily rest and mental culture his servants, to fit them to pursue their allotted toil, resigned to his will, content with their portion. For see, in our Sabbath the prince and slave, the philosopher and labourer, the man and the beast of burden all alike participate; and when we resort to the house of God to serve Him, the pomp, the pride, the retinue of vehicles and of anxious servants must be left behind; for the horse is not to carry the owner, nor is the servant to do servile work for his master on that day. The king, therefore, should he come hither, must walk amid the crowd of worshippers who appear before the great King, and in nothing can he claim any distinction above them except he be a truer

servant of the Creator, and more intelligent in knowing his Master, the Lord of all.

If now we are compelled to admit that human reason would not have set apart one entire day for rest and a total abstinence from labour: it will nevertheless be apparent, that this institution is eminently calculated to promote a strong reliance upon the Lord; inasmuch as it will present itself as a day of leisure to the whole community; and their welfare as a mass will be greatly increased if they, with one accord, pretermitting their daily toil, resort to the houses of worship to acknowledge that they are all servants, receivers of benefits, children in their great Father's world, scholars in their Teacher's school; if they devote this day to rest, because the Lord of their labour bids them rest; if they listen to instruction because their Master teaches, and rely on Him for blessing during their cessation of labour, because the Father who never deceives, promises them eternal delight, if they restrain their foot on the Sabbath day, and execute not their desires on the holy day of the Lord.—It need not be told you that the Sabbath was ordained to commemorate the creation and our going forth out of Egypt; because your reading of the Bible has informed you thereof full often, nay, the Ten Commandments, familiar to you from early childhood, lay it down as a reason, "And remember that thou hast been a servant in Egypt." Besides this, the subject has before this been presented to your consideration. I intend to-day merely to call your attention to the fact, that the laws not founded upon human reason were given as trials of faith, as a means of binding the people to God. So then,

when we are told that any act is the will of the Lord to be done, that another one is to be left undone by order of the same, we should not hesitate in yielding obedience, nor falter in our duty; but we should surrender our own judgment, necessarily circumscribed by worldly views and limits, to the all-searching wisdom of God, whose eyes range over all nature, in the elevated heights, and in the unsearchable depths. He is the sole Arbiter of what is reasonable, of what is useful, and what is hurt-bringing. He knows the connexion of things, and asks nothing which is really injurious to the peace and welfare of the world.—But, besides all this, the creature as such owes something to the Creator, otherwise there could be no divine rule on earth. Great acts of charity, of towering benevolence, of wide-spreading philanthropy are not within the range of every man, nor always within the daily scope of even the wise and highly endowed. But acts of devotion, abstaining from things prohibited, the surrendering of the heart to divine instruction, the acquiescence in divine mandates, are daily and hourly within the power of every, even the humblest individual; and the little prayer breathed before we enjoy the Creator's gift; the revenge we suppress because of the Creator's will; the food we leave untasted because the Creator calls it unclean; the scroll we affix to the post, because it contains the Creator's word; the priestly blessing we receive, because it is the Creator's benediction:—in short, all acts of devotion, all restraining of the desires even in minute things—all purify the heart, all elevate the spirit.—And with the faithful, therefore, the whole existence on earth is one series of acts of devotion, one con-

tinual scene of piety displayed; and even the ordinary acts of life then become, as also the pursuit of our daily avocations, a part and an integral portion of the service of the Most High, and the domestic fireside, the wide ocean, the shady forest, the couch of sickness, the nuptial feast, the mourner's dwelling, as well as the churches and schools of religion, are then converted into temples of the Holy God, who dwelleth in the heart of those that are faithful and true. "It is the heart the merciful One requires," say our wise men, that is to say, in order to be religious we should feel the devotion which we outwardly profess; our lives should be consistent, and by no act, word or thought ever should we dare to profane the name of God. But on the contrary we should receive all the commandments, being, as they actually are, the emanations of the same Wisdom, as equally obligatory, nor should we ever presume to offend against either of them, or question their wisdom or usefulness. For if we do the latter, are we not in fact setting up our judgment above the wisdom of God? Do we not, if we rebel, exalt ourselves above our Maker? Say we not by our conduct, "Depart thou from us!" if we neglect the duties which He thinks proper to prescribe for us? And yet persons call themselves religious, lovers of God, who select and choose the duties they wish to perform, rejecting some as unwise, others as useless; they honour God, but cannot put faith in Him; they read his law, but know not the sabbathic rest; they are certified, "And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant," yet they neglect circumcision; they are told, "You shall be to me a

holy people," yet they defile themselves by the flesh of the swine and the creeping things of the earth; they are taught, "And thou shalt teach the word carefully to thy children," yet they suffer their offspring to grow up in ignorance of the law of the Lord; they are warned against, "And thou shalt not intermarry with them," and still with professions of religion on their lips, they seek the embrace of those not in covenant with the Lord. It is the deplorable effect of over-refinement, of the wisdom in our own eyes, that induces us to debase ourselves thus before Him who searches the heart; He asks obedience, but we will be obedient if we think it reasonable. Wo! wo! that such should be our folly! To-day we know not, in our self-conceit, what are the motives of the law, we are ignorant, and therefore reject the life-bringing precepts, because of our ignorance alone, just as the silly patient dashes from his lips the healing draught of the friendly physician that might perhaps, with Heaven's blessing, restore him to health and friends. But lo! in a brief space our eyes are opened, we see the wonders of the divine law, and then as transgressors we lament too late our wilful blindness that refused to be led by divine guidance. "God hath told us what is good," and Him alone we are to consult by an inspection of his word; nor should we falter because of the unpleasantness, the danger and loss which compliance might occasion us. We are God's children, and as children we should listen to advice, not like equals dispute the point of right. God wishes obedience, not repentance; He wills us to hear, not to atone for disobedience by magnificent gifts. For

in the willingness to serve alone lies the merit, or as we have expressed it, in the yielding of our own desires and wisdom to the supreme power and wisdom of God. This also we are taught in the Bible:—

ויאמר שמואל החפץ לה׳ בעלות וזבחים כשמע
בקול ה׳ הנה שמע מזבח טוב להקשיב מחלב אילים:
כי חטאת קסם מרי ואון ותרפים הפצר:

שמו׳ א׳ טו׳ כב׳ כג׳:

"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offering and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, to hearken, than the fat of rams. For rebellion is the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness, iniquity and idolatry." 1 Samuel xv. 22, 23.

This memorable passage occurs in the history of Saül. When Israel went forth from Egypt, Amalek lay in wait for them on the road and attacked them, when they were faint and fatigued. When Saül had now obtained dominion over Israel, he was sent to slay man, and woman, and every thing belonging to Amalek. The decree was a severe one; but it was the will of God, and as such should have been obeyed. But Saül hesitated; he spared the king, and the best of the flock and cattle in order to sacrifice them to the Lord. When Samuel arrived at the camp he was aware of the delinquency of the king; but in order to bring the sin home to him, he engaged him in conversation, till Saül avowed his purpose, and also because he averred that the people seemed unwilling to execute the command, and that deferring to them he had spared the flock to make sacrifices. It was then

the prophet exhibited to him the right way of pleasing God, that implicit obedience alone could satisfy Him who stands in no need of our services, and to whom all the princes of the earth are as nothing and their doings as vanity. Willingness is the sacrifice He demands; obeying is his incense; but the presumption of judging for ourselves is a want of faith, a rebellion against the Most High.—Here we will rest at present; and let us well ponder on the awful responsibility we are hourly incurring by the rebelliousness of our spirit and the stubbornness of our heart; and O, let us never—never—deserve the denunciation, that we are rejected, because we have despised the word of the Lord; but on the contrary let us give up our heart and soul to an absorbing obedience, to a filial devotion, to an entire saving faith, in order that by obeying we may receive the approbation of the Lord, which is the greatest good, the highest blessing, which frail humanity can hope to earn.

Father! teach us obedience, assist us to subdue our evil desires to thy will, and lead us through this life of trial shielded by thy wisdom, that we may awaken, when we have passed the portals of death, surrounded by the light and that happiness which Thou wilt give unto those that fear Thee! Amen.

Adar 8th. } 5599.
Feb. 22d. }

NOTE.—It will be perceived that there is an interval of full thirteen months between this and the next discourse. The reason for this long suspending of my functions was as follows, and it will indicate the then precarious tenure of the office of preacher. The evening preceding Sabbath *Zachor*, when I delivered the above ad-

dress, I happened to be at the house of the Parnass, but omitted to state my intention of speaking on the morrow; because it was always repugnant to me to publish my purpose of giving a lecture, not wishing to draw people especially to listen to a discourse, and thus make preaching of more consequence than the reading of the service, the sermons being, as will appear from an inspection of these volumes, merely occasional exercises, and not a stated part of the worship, and delivered at longer or shorter intervals, just as occasion seemed to demand, and health permitted their preparation. The female portion of the Parnass's family were not at Synagogue on Sabbath morning. At the conclusion of the service the just-named functionary asked me, in a somewhat angry tone, why he had not been informed of my intention to speak that day, as his family would then have had the option of attending. The answer, substantially as given above, failed to satisfy him, and he told me at once that he should be heard from on the subject. A day or two after, a written order from him arrived, directing me to notify him at least one day before I intended to speak thereafter, of course making my doing so the condition on which I could act as preacher. Deeming this procedure a degradation of the ministry, as it would be in effect to render public teaching dependent on the preacher's subserviency to the temporal authorities, and not willing to act without their consent, I refrained from addressing the people until the president revoked his order, when I resumed my lectures at once. It must be observed that I was engaged as Hazan only during my entire connexion of twenty-one years' duration with the Mikvé Israel Synagogue; consequently the president could at any time, if he chose, stop me in my voluntary preachership. The congregation, moreover, did not interfere, as far as known to myself, to induce a revocation of the obnoxious order, though several members desired me indeed to resume speaking; but while the onerous condition lasted, my mouth was sealed, and it was only at a later period that, by public resolution, authority was conferred on me to speak, and I continued then to do so till a few months before my office expired, but no by-law had after all been passed, instituting the office of preacher, leaving therefore the whole matter subject to the control of the Parnass, even to the extent of interdicting it if it had pleased him to do so. There has been a great change with regard to religious discourses since that time, and preachers are now sought and well endowed, instead of their almost forcing the public to listen to them gratuitously.—The change is truly gratifying.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE RESIGNATION OF AARON.

SHEPHERD of Israel, hear! God of Jacob, listen to our prayer! hearken to our voice from the lands of our banishment, from amidst the nations where we dwell cast out from our inheritance for the sake of the transgressions which we have transgressed in thy presence. How long, O Lord! shall we sigh amidst the gentiles? how long shall the handful of Israel be given up to the rule, the oppression, of their enemies, who would fain devour them, because they cling to thy holy Name, amidst all their wanderings and their sorrows? Arise, O God! and display thy holy arm before the eyes of all nations, and "sprinkle us with the waters of purification," as Thou hast spoken, "that we may be clean, and be cleansed from all our filthiness, and from all our idols; and put thy spirit within us, in order that we may walk in thy statutes, and that Thou alone shalt be our God." Amen.

BRETHREN!

We read in Leviticus x. 3.

ויאמר משה אל אהרן הוא אשר דבר ה׳ לאמר
בקרבי אקדש ועל פני כל העם אכבד וידם אהרן:
ויקרא י׳ ג׳:

"Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is what the Lord hath spoken, saying, In those that come nigh unto me will I be sanctified, and before all the people will I be glorified. And Aaron held his peace," *i. e.*, he remained silent.

It is pleasant to us, when we see a man, raised high above the level of his fellows, guided by the same principles which govern the less favoured; it is refreshing, when we see the sage drinking from the same fountain of knowledge which invigorates the minds of the humble; but it is more sweet and refreshing than both these instances combined, when we see the holy influence of religion exerting its power over the bereaved heart, when it has consigned back some spirit, held dear for the ties of kindred and friendship, into the hands of its Giver, and when, without repining, it yields itself a resigned sufferer unto the Judge who measures all our steps. It is truly then, that the servant of God rises above the level of the common mass; for it is he alone who, feeling deeply the infliction of God, can yield himself submissively to the decree that has gone forth without murmur or complaint; because he bears that within which teaches him that it is not fitting for the creature to dive doubtingly and complainingly into the ways of his Maker, although the chastisement have fallen on himself.— A notable instance of this kind we have furnished to us in that part of the history of Aaron which we have just quoted. Seven days had elapsed since this noble Levite had, together with his four sons, received daily the consecration to the service of the Most High from the hands of his prophet brother; and on the eighth day, which had then arrived, he had been first installed to officiate with the aid of his sons in the Lord's sanctuary. The people were all assembled; from the altar arose the smoke of the sacrifices which had been instituted as the perpetual offering of a grateful people to their benevolent Father; and the chosen min-

isters were the chief, who had gone hand in hand with the renowned prophet before the tyrant of Egypt, and spoken the message which had been sent to demand the liberation of Israel, and the offspring of his loins whom the Lord had given him. Aaron had thus indeed received a great reward, and he, who had been the herald of the redemption of his fellow-Israelites, was fit to become the instrument for the expiation of their sins at the altar. Besides this, the glory of the Lord was displayed before the people; for when Aaron with his sons had come down from the altar after offering the sin, the burnt and peace-offering, and he and Moses had blessed the people, the visible presence of the Most High was made manifest before the eyes of the adoring multitude, and all then felt that now indeed they were reconciled to their Father in heaven, who deigned to dwell in the humble tabernacle which their own hands had erected. Can you imagine a moment of greater triumph than Aaron must have then enjoyed? The everlasting priesthood, to endure unto the end of time, was his; the representatives that were to possess it after his temporal death were before him, around him; the people for whom he had risked his life, for whom he had toiled, for whom he had almost incurred the doing of a great sin, had been purified of their transgression; that law which at one time had well-nigh been cast aside for the idol of Egypt was again triumphant, and the tables of its holy covenant were deposited in the ark under the shadow of the wings of the Cherubim, under the custody of himself and descendants. All around him were joy, exultation, and gladness; the people shouted when the fire came

down upon the altar and consumed the sacrifices and the fat, and all fell upon their faces and worshipped. Here then was the consummation of all his hopes, of all his desires; and onward seemed the march of the nation to the Holy Land, there to erect unto everlasting the sanctuary and the worship of the God of truth. Did he dream of sorrow? was his heart awake to the terrible bereavement that was impending?—O no, he was secure in his confidence, he felt free from all care and apprehension; still at that very moment two of his sons, the first-born and his brother, presumed to enter the tabernacle with a strange fire, which God had not ordained; they added to the commandment, which was not to be augmented or diminished under pain of death; they wished to offer more incense than the mere handful which the decree of the Lord demanded; perhaps, in imitation of the heathens, they desired to fill the house of the Creator with the sweet incense, the cloud of aromatic herbs, the products perhaps of the happy Araby and the distant India. But this strange sacrifice was not pleasing, because it had not been ordained, and a fire went out and destroyed their life, even whilst they were in the sanctuary. Here then lay the hopes of Aaron blighted; the sons, in whom he had confided and who were to assist and to succeed him, had in the moment of wanton forgetfulness of the law, the chosen ministers of which they had been appointed, forfeited their lives; they had died the death of transgressors against the majesty of the Lord. He had himself sunk from the height of exultation, from the pinnacle of happiness, into the depth of sorrow and anguish; and the shout of the people's joy was changed into the sound of wailing

and regret, because of the burning which the Lord had burned.

It was at this moment that Moses approached his mourning brother, and said to him: "This is it that the Lord hath spoken, saying, In those that come nigh unto me will I be sanctified, and before all the people will I be glorified," meaning, that from those who have received the greater light the greater responsibility will be required; the nearer man approaches to his Maker the more energetically will his faults be punished. God is no Respecter of persons; He knows no distinction between his creatures; He observes the ways of all; He cares for all; He provides for all. But as order is Heaven's first law, it is necessary that there should be degrees among mankind, that there be some exalted above their fellows by the greater gift of riches, of power, and of wisdom, in order that they all might be made instrumental in the proper government of the world. It was therefore so ordained that, in proportion to the endowment, should be the accountability, that it may be proved to the comprehension of every son of man that the Supreme Judge is good alike, and just alike to all, and that the gifts He bestows are not to be regarded as the exclusive property of the actual possessor, but as the means to distribute the benefits which may be derived from them, as the almoner of his Creator, among those of his fellow-creatures who come within the sphere of his action. It is true that God could have created all men alike, both physically and mentally; but then, there would have been no order or subordination, because all being alike (something different from equal) no one would have been willing to obey, and every

one would have been anxious to command. As things now are, we find enough of contention; how much more had the gifts of the Supreme been alike bestowed, unless man should cease to be man, a mixture of good and evil! If therefore the man in authority transgresses, he transgresses not only for himself, that is, he does not only sin as an individual, but he transgresses also for the people, his sin becomes an example, a stone of hinderance to the subordinate and the less learned. Although therefore, it may be said, that all mankind are alike bound by the same religion, there is still an additional obligation of more particular care imposed upon those prominent either by station or intellect; they are to guide unto good, and give no cause for offence to the general multitude. They, therefore, who like Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, are selected from among the people to stand in behalf of them before the Lord, should expect to receive instant and condign punishment for every great fault they are guilty of, for the reason that the Lord may be sanctified by the visitation which they, as those nearer to the Creator, receive, and that all the people may glorify the even-handed justice which is meted out both to the lowly and the exalted.

It was this point which Moses meant to impress upon his brother; he offered him no commonplace consolation, he did not tell him not to grieve for the loss of his sons; but he called his attention to the fact, that it was a just visitation of their God whose law the slain ones had transgressed, and that it was for the glorification of his justice that they were taken at the moment of their sinning; because their having

been called to come nigh unto the Lord should have taught them that it was their duty to be very careful, how they fulfilled their ministry, not by regarding it as having been given for their own gratification, not by exhibiting themselves as raised above the law, but by displaying a cheerful obedience, a ready acquiescence in all that had been commanded, in order that their service might cause the Lord to be sanctified, and his glory to be felt by all the people. Their life had failed to effect this; they transgressed, they made a law of their own, they offered a strange fire; their death was therefore required to effect the object of their priesthood—and they died before the Lord.

Aaron felt the force of the prophet's rebuke, and he held his peace; he looked upon the corpses of his sons, and he felt they had sinned; he uttered no cry of anguish, he expressed no repining after God's justice, he spoke not of his loss, of his bereavement; but his soul rose triumphant in its confidence in the Lord, and he held his peace, he remained silent, acknowledging that it is better for him to be bereft of his children, than that the equal justice of his Creator should be impugned; he acknowledged, that the blow which had been struck at his peace was for the good of his people, who also had a right and portion in their ministers who had been selected from among them. And when he was bidden not to exhibit outward signs of mourning, neither he nor his remaining sons, but that all the congregation might mourn for the loss of those who perished for their instruction and improvement: he again submitted to the mandate, not forgetting that it became him to prove to the people that he could conform to the behests of

the Lord, although his heart was torn with grief. But think you that Aaron did not feel keenly his bereavement? Then read the sequel of the chapter from which our text was chosen; Moses searched for the sin-offering, and finding it burnt, he expressed his indignation to his brother's sons for their not having eaten the sacrifice as ordained; but hear Aaron's answer: "Behold this day have they offered their sin and their burnt-offering before the Lord; and such things have befallen me; and if I had eaten the sin-offering to-day, would it have been acceptable in the eyes of the Lord?" This unpretending reply proves more strongly than any pathetic picture could have done, that, though the *anointed priest* yielded obedience, yet the *father* felt his loss; he could not partake of the sacrifice, his soul was with his departed sons, and rather than desecrate the offering of his Master by partaking of it without a proper regard to its sanctity and the object of its institution, he preferred having it burnt, which was the remedy if aught of the sacrifice should have been left till the following morning. Moses acknowledged the force of Aaron's reply and he felt satisfied; in other words, the holy spirit which spoke through the prophet assented to the piety of the father; it permitted him to feel, whilst it demanded resignation and an unrepining submission to the decree of the dread Judge of all.

A resignation like this of Aaron is one of the highest efforts which man can show in the service of his Maker; it is the noblest sacrifice of self which he can offer up on the altar of heaven-born religion. It is when we are afflicted, when the tide of our prosperity is turned, that we should have within us that exalted

confidence in the Lord's goodness, which should move us to hold our peace, ay, while the eyes are suffused with the warm gush of nature's overflow, the scalding tear, while the heart heaves with convulsive throes, while the mouth fails in uttering forth the cry which is wrung from the keenness of the wound which the soul inwardly feels. Yes, it is then that religion exhibits her empire, when she binds the stricken more closely to his God, unites more firmly to the great Father the confiding child. But, brethren! it is not only at the moment when sorrow has invaded your dwelling, that you should reach forth your hand to snatch the balm which religion imparts; you are not to wait to invigorate yourselves with the dictates of our holy law until the time you are afflicted; for this would be merely using Heaven's best gift as a species of medicine, which the patient is willing enough to take only while writhing under pain, but which he refuses to touch when health is returning. Besides this, it is very questionable, if religion can act as a temporary sedative, any more than the remedies of the earthly physician, if by excesses we have destroyed our constitution, or counteract the effects of a skilful cure by imprudence after our recovery.—Think you that Aaron's acquiescence was the effect of the admonition of Moses, produced only at the moment, and not before existing, latent, in his soul? If you think so you greatly err, for Aaron had long been schooled in the ways of God; he had felt his goodness, had seen his mighty power, and witnessed his justice. He had confided long since in the Justice with which the world is governed, and when the shaft struck him too, he could submit pa-

tiently, meekly, devoutly; he bowed to the chastening Hand, he adored, though he suffered. Let it be the same with us all. No one lives who can save his soul from death. The dark portal at the entrance of eternity all have to pass; the grave has been appointed the common receptacle for all the living on our sphere; the silent earth, or the stormy deep, or the scathing fire, or the fowls of heaven will, at a time not far remote, receive our mortal remains; all the elements have been appointed our destroyers, all nature seems leagued against our remaining long on earth. What right then have we to look upon ourselves and our nearest friends as more exempt than others from the common fate of humanity? where is the warrant which assures us that our fortune, our hopes, our joys, are to stand more firmly than the fortune, the hopes, the joys of others? Vain delusion, if we deceive ourselves! fatal error, if we cleave so closely to earth! A breath of wind may overturn our fortune; a stroke of lightning may mar our fondest hopes; an unforeseen accident may banish our joys; things we fondly cling to are snatched from our grasp whilst our eyes are gloating on them; the food not yet devoured is perhaps the destroyer of our life; the hand that smooths the pillow of our couch of sickness may in a moment be palsied by death. And shall we then not be prepared by a holy life, a faithful reliance upon Providence, for the coming of the storm which must shipwreck our hopes? are we to go on from day to day, from hour to hour, to rivet yet faster the chains which bind us to the mundane globe, and loosen the bonds that unite us to our heavenly Father? Shall wives, shall children, shall fathers and mothers, shall

brothers and sisters, shall friends and kindred, shall wealth and renown, shall wisdom and honour be for ever holding our spirit in thraldom, and keep us chained to the chariot of worldly ambition, forgetful of the end that is sure impending? Ay, could we ourselves do aught to secure our possessions from loss, and our friends from death, then indeed might our excessive love for them be pardonable; but since they are merely lent to us for a period, to be taken away again whenever the Giver finds it for good to withdraw them: how can we regard them as absolutely our own, and their withdrawal as a personal injury done to ourselves? Why should we not, since all on earth is fleeting, transitory, perishable, decaying, seek to accumulate treasures which are undying? why should we not in moments of prosperity and joy endeavour to calm our exultation, and to look towards the period when a change will come? why not fortify ourselves, whilst we are at peace, with faith and confidence, and reliance, and fortitude, and learn to lean for support upon the Rock of ages, that we may be able to stand erect when at length the storm of adversity assails us?—And yet there are those who go on sinning, glorying in their wickedness, prosperous in their misdeeds, as though for them there is no evil; they live, forgetful that there is an accountability for them because of all the wrong they have done. But the wheel of mourning that rolls round in the world at length reaches them too; the neglected Sabbaths, the profaned holy days, the forsaken covenant, the unprayed orisons, the hope in God not felt by them, have not been able to ward off the evil; it has come and lodged in their house: where now is their secu-

rity? where now is their hope? where now is their stay? They mourn because of the wound which death has struck, as though they had suffered a wrong from the Creator; they complain and repine, as though they had no longer any hope or joy in aught that is theirs; they murmur, as though it was not an all-wise Providence that has thought fit to afflict them, to recall as it were their thoughts from the vanities of this life, and to fix them the more firmly on yon bright future in the realms of bliss, which is to be gained only through obedience and a filial reliance upon the promises of benignant religion. Yet if they would but consider that their former striving had been after vanities; their former security but a flattering self-delusion; their want of faith a rebellion against God; the neglect of the Sabbath and the other precepts an actual treason against the great King: how readily would they acquiesce in the justice of the decree that has been pronounced against the visitation that has been meted out to them. And if they could not like Aaron hold their peace out of full confidence in the goodness of the Lord, if their sinful life permitted them not to see mercy in the storm as well as in the sunshine: they would at least be willing to submit to their punishment with meekness becoming unto repentant sinners, and learn henceforward to seek mercy and forgiveness from the Fountain of mercy.

For we may maintain as a well-established principle that every visitation is intended for our improvement; nothing is fortuitous or the effect of chance, all, all is the effect of design, the working of Providence; not an insect perishes in the flame of a lamp

around which it has been buzzing,—not a bird is snared by the fowler,—not a plant springs from the ground and withers,—not a flower blossoms and perishes, unless it be by the decree of the Omnipotent, who is good alike to all; the apparent evil, death itself, is but a stepping-stone to happiness, and the road to felicity leads through trials and tribulation. Is it then right to regard lightly the chastisements we may encounter? or perhaps are they to harden yet more our hearts, that we may still more obstinately reject the counsels of wisdom which the Bible so bountifully offers to our acceptance? Should any one say in the indifference of his callous heart, in the scornfulness of his unbelief: "My son died in the course of nature, he was cut off in his bloom, as other children die." Or, again: "I have not deserved such punishment; Providence deals unjustly and cruelly with me?" To the one we would reply that, although death *is* in the course of nature, still every time it occurs it is in consequence of a special edict from the Guardian and Ruler of the world; and that so far from the bereavement being merely accidental, it could not have been otherwise than designedly sent as a warning to arouse the attention; for there is no chance; we cannot suppose that such uncertainty could at all enter into the system of nature as designed by an all-wise Architect. To the second we would say: No man is punished without a just cause, and granting that you are not conscious of wrong, still rest assured that you have been weighed and found wanting, and that you have committed sins in the very acts which your interests, inclinations, or passions have taught you to regard as innocent. Thus

if you profane habitually the Sabbath, if you refuse to enter your children in the Lord's covenant, if you obstinately persist in not teaching them the words of the law, if in short you are regardless of the Mosaic code—transgressing the precepts—and are an indolent follower of forbidden pleasures—are you not a sinner in the eyes of the Lord, although in your own estimation you are innocent and pure?

If, therefore, any evil befalls us, we should at once set about investigating our conduct, and reform the sinfulness of our ways; perhaps the Lord may see our altered course, and remove from us farther his anger. And, are not the punishments the tempests which purify the moral life, just as the winds and lightnings those which clear the physical atmosphere? Do we blame the Almighty for causing the wind to blow which lashes into foam the before placid ocean? Do we arraign the justice of Providence for the vivid lightning which plays around our dwelling and terrifies our appalled vision? Does not every one recognize them as harbingers of good, as the agents sent to refresh the earth, to restore vegetation, to destroy noxious vapours which else might settle down upon the surface of the globe, and corrupt the air, the water, and the soil whence we derive our sustenance? But precisely similar are the visitations which ever and anon come over us; the placidity of our uniform life's current may be lashed into billows, but the Lord is in the storm; He calls our attention to the noxious, to the putrefied state of our conduct, He bids us to remove the evil which we discover, in order that, when the storm has spent its rage, we may stand before Him renovated in the strength of divine love and live

unto eternity. Let the lightning rend our peace, let its desolation be visible in our dwelling, let us be shaken by the roll of the thunder: be assured God is in the fire, it is His voice we hear. He calls us to Him, He rouses us from our slumber, He appeals to our better feeling, He wills that we should awaken from the torpor of deadly sin, and live in His presence, scathed, yet purified—smitten, yet cleansed—wounded, yet healed again. If thus we look upon sufferings, who can say that they are not fit instruments for the purposes of a beneficent Providence to instruct and improve mankind? Prosperity but blunts the feelings; constant success but binds man closer to life; uninterrupted well-being but induces him to toil more energetically to gain a larger share of the world's goods; and very often it is affliction only which teaches him better things. Happy indeed would it be, if the empire of religion were so far extended, that in the hours of joy man would take it to heart to become a truer servant of the Most High; that, when success augments his stores, he would consecrate his life to God, and repose on the days when labour is forbidden; to walk humbly amidst the shouts of admiration; to feel himself mortal even in the very hour of conquest and triumph. But, alas! many then have an ear only for flattery; a heart only for pride; a leisure only for enjoyment; a mind only for worldly things; no time for religion, no mind for prayer, no hour for worship, no day for rest. All, all is one whirl of excitement, one rush after gain and renown: religion lies neglected, God is forgotten. It is therefore that admonitions come opportunely to the aid of our better nature, to move us to cast off the

fatal moral indolence, to induce us to review our way, and to apply the remedy where we discover defects. For it is at the time when our pride has been rebuked by adversity, when our medical skill has shown itself incompetent to save the life of a beloved offspring, when the accumulated wealth of ages has been unable to purchase one hour of a life of sufferings, when man utterly feels his helplessness without Divine assistance, when we experience a disgust at worldly greatness, and worldly wealth, and worldly wisdom which failed to afford us relief,—that we are drawn towards the Creator and his mercy, to the God who can give life and health, and whose are the wisdom and understanding. If we now profit by this devotional feeling called up at the moment of sorrow, if we let our afflictions make a lasting impression on our future life and conduct: then may it be truly said, that God has been sanctified by our bereavement, and been glorified by our humiliation, and the death of a friend by which he was released from bodily ailment may have opened to us the gates of heaven. It is not only by the death of the sons of Aaron by whom the glory of the Lord was to be extended, but likewise by the departure hence of every son of Adam to the latest generation. There is a lesson to be drawn from every death-bed scene, from the sinner's as well as of the righteous; and the one dying in his impenitence teaches with no less force than the calm resignation of the other. Every thing, in short, that occurs to us is full of import, and will guide us on to a happier lot, if we will but heed the instruction hourly afforded unto us.

If we now do take the Divine dispensations to heart

as faithful servants, do thank our Creator amidst our afflictions as well as our joys: how sweet will the incense be which we thus offer to Him; our subdued pride, our renewed hope, our regenerated life, our love of law rekindled to burn with a bright flame unto our dying day will appeal for us to our everlasting Father, and He will send his grace unto our afflicted soul and refresh it with his comforting spirit. Sorrow will be changed into joy, anguish into exultation; and instead of repining and complaint, there will be meek resignation and humble submission. No rebellious feeling will be called up, no murmur because of the dispensation will be heard; but in entire faith, in the full hope of a better hereafter we will exclaim: "He is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth good to Him!" When one endowed with such holy resignation does stand weeping over the grave of his beloved wife, or his only offspring cut off in the early vigour of manhood and renown, it needs but to remind him that it is God who has afflicted him; it were vain to offer any other consolation, he will at once recognize the force of the appeal, he will recall his wavering confidence and rest of the soul, and bear with meekness the loss he has sustained, and endeavour in renewed activity, in benevolence and devotion, to regain his lost composure.

Religion bids us not, not to mourn; it tells us not, that we should not regret the death of our friends; on the contrary, it prescribes observances which are eminently calculated to arouse the feelings. We rend the garment, we eat the bread of mourning, we sit on the ground, we adorn not the person, we are to abstain from pleasure, we are not to mix in general

society; and all this has been ordained that we might dwell with serious reflection upon the evil that has come upon us. But when the thirty days for all but our father and mother, for whom we are to seclude ourselves for an entire year, have elapsed, it is the duty of the mourner to resume his walk amidst his fellow-men; his regret need not to cease with this period, but the outward exhibition of grief surely should; and I know not whether the custom of wearing particular garments, by those who have lost friends, beyond the prescribed time, may not be safely regarded as opposed to the spirit of religion. There is no question, however, that it is sinful to carry regret to too great an extent, to let months elapse before composure is restored, to have the house darkened, or to wear sombre-coloured garments, or to refuse mingling again in society, for too long a period; for such behaviour tells but too plainly, that the sufferer refuses to yield himself to the decrees of Heaven, that he perhaps thinks that he has been afflicted with an unmerited injury from his God. A fault like this is but too apt to be committed by the more wealthy and respectable portions of the community; they are not actively enough employed and have too much leisure for profitless reflection, especially if their faith and religious conviction should not be sufficiently firm and confiding. It is well, however, to remind them that, with the past sorrows, the hand of the Lord is not straitened, and that His arm is yet outstretched to smite them with renewed plagues. And who knows but that their stubbornness may merit a new punishment, and that in addition to the one already taken another may also be soon required, or that

some other calamity yet may be sent, a calamity which they now but little dream of? For what sin can be greater than a rebellious heart? what conduct more deserving of visitation than murmuring against the dispensation of Providence? And yet we constantly see such unbecoming grief exhibited, and men will brave the vengeance of Heaven by their unyielding, disconsolate behaviour. Why should we be disconsolate? Say you, because one dear to us has fallen! Truly a friend has fallen, but he fell as all must fall when their appointed hour has come; he was summoned hence by the will of his Maker, the Lord of his body and his soul, who deemed it best now to close the earthly career of him we deplore, because his task was ended, or because his death was necessary for the edification of the world or ourselves, and for the glory of his God.

We will now define resignation, as a close to the subject which we have been considering to-day. Resignation consists not in indifference, in a brutal disregard of life, but in the filial deference to the will of God, because it was his pleasure to afflict us. It proceeds from a well-grounded belief in the constant supervision of Providence and in his overruling goodness, in the unwavering faith that every thing which is sent by Him is for the ultimate happiness of mankind. It farther teaches us that all sublunary things, wealth, wisdom, power, renown, nay even life itself are fleeting, and of uncertain duration, liable to be resumed at any moment by Him who gave them. Therefore it impresses upon the pious man the necessity of a cheerful submission whenever the evil reaches him in his turn, and admonishes him to

look for support from the Author of his being to sustain him amidst his affliction. It will light up joy within him amidst the gloom of despair, and instruct him how to extract the grace of life from the poison of distress and sorrow. Yes, it will incite him to robe himself with piety and meekness, to stretch forth his hand to the fruit of the tree of life, to the words of the law, to the precepts of the everlasting King, in whose presence there is the fulness of joy, and in whose temple all speaks glory.

You, therefore, beloved brethren! who have intrusted to the cold earth the bodies of your beloved ones, rejoice in the Lord! glorify His name, despite of your affliction! bow your heads to the rod that chasteneth you! and learn to enter life everlasting through the gate of tribulation. In the heavenly Gilead there is a balm, a Physician too is there; and if you say in the sincerity of your heart: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord! our God, King of the universe, who art a righteous Judge;" if you thank Him in the hour of anguish as well as the moments of joy: be assured that the balm will be poured into your wounds, and that the great Physician will heal your bruises by his everlasting grace; and you will be like Aaron of old endowed with strength to submit with resignation and calm fortitude to the decree, which has sealed the portion of your beloved ones unto unending life!

Lord above! bless thy people; bless them in their going out, bless them in their coming in; guard them whilst sojourning on earth, and guide them to thy holy sanctuary; purify their hearts in order that they may serve Thee unto evermore, and comfort

them in their affliction, even as the mother comforteth her son. May this be thy will! Amen.

Veadar 20th. } 5600.
March 25th. }

DISCOURSE VII.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE.

To Him who sits enthroned in the assembly of his holy servants, in whose presence all speaks of his glory, who is almighty to save, who is faithful to his covenant, and to whose days there is no end, be glory and praise unto everlasting; and may his name be blessed for evermore in the assemblies of his people Israel, and of all sons of flesh, his creatures. Amen.

Brethren!

Moses, the man of God, was one of those favoured mortals who have at times been permitted to arrive at a nearer approach to the Deity, than falls to the share of other men. In other words, he was a prophet, a messenger deputed to work out by extraordinary displays of power the mission of his Sender. He came back into Egypt to a people debased by slavery and a broken spirit, subdued by the fear of their powerful task-masters, and corrupted by the evil examples, the idolatry, and the moral depravity of their highly-refined tyrants, as a messenger merely of good tidings, not armed with worldly greatness, not fol-

lowed by a numerous retinue to enforce his demands, but as an individual full of a high resolve, laden with a potent spell, to essay the fulfilment of his message without a resort to human co-operation, without the employment of earthly means. He became the chosen instrument of Israel's redemption; and the Passover which we now celebrate was instituted to keep the memory of this event ever alive and unforgotten among our latest descendants. He, the outcast, the shepherd of his kinsman's flocks in the desert of Horeb, the man diffident of his own powers, unable to articulate correctly, because he was heavy of speech, he who had sought refuge among roving hordes of an inhospitable land, became enabled to humble unto submission the proudest and most magnificent monarch of that age, and by divine assistance was permitted to raise those, who like him were descended from the noble stock of Abraham, to the enviable distinction of being made the depositary of God's covenant. In this manner the oppressors and the oppressed changed positions; they who had formerly wisdom to bestow could now well become learners from those they formerly ruled over; and thus were shown, to the conviction of every one who thinks, the nothingness of human power when contending against the will of the Supreme, and the emptiness of a mortal's knowledge when compared with the wisdom flowing directly from the Source of truth and light.

It must have been under the influence of feelings of this kind that Moses composed the beautiful prayer which is the ninetieth in our collection of Psalms. He opens with an acknowledgment of the divine protec-

tion which had ever been extended to Israel from the beginning of the world. He then alludes to the eternity of God, and his goodness in snatching man from the ways of sin by timely admonition and the acceptance of repentance. He next compares the infinity of the Creator with the perishableness of the creature, which nevertheless dares to provoke the wrath of the Omnipotent by its reckless disregard of his precepts. He expatiates on the brief space allotted to man during his sojourn on earth, and the sorrows to which his sinful nature exposes him. Again he pictures the effects of God's indignation towards the wayward child, and the terrible power which the All-wise has over all nature. He endeavours to contrast the Lord's greatness with man's insignificance, not by entering into details, but by exhibiting so to say the brief outline which his devotional feelings have called up in his mind: he is lost in the immensity of the Almighty's goodness and might, and only sees refuge for mortals in a devout fear of the Creator, and in a reverential obedience to his precepts. He feels that there is safety in virtue alone, and then continues:

למנות ימינו כן הודע ונבא לבב חכמה : תהלים צ' יב' :

"Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Ps. xc. 12.

Man in the vanity of his heart considers himself of immense importance in the scale of society, he fancies himself the observed of all observers, as one whose fortunes stand firm, and whose days are of enduring length. What are to him the humble in

wealth, the meek in spirit, the old in years, the decrepit by disease? He is their superior; he is of lofty station, of great wealth, high in mind, and confident in his power; he is in the springtime of life, and disease and its corroding pangs are to him unknown. He therefore steps abroad lightly and full of confidence, he is assured that evil will not reach him, and that he is born to command, or it may be even that death will not have dominion over *his* body. To one so completely enamoured of self (and there are many such) life appears made solely for the individual alone, all must yield submissively to him, and he can learn but little from others; for in wisdom and in learning he fancies himself superior to almost all who are his companions, and he therefore spurns advice and instruction as derogatory to his assumed dignity. It need not be that this fancied great being should be actually of high importance; for alas! the number of those is great who claim a rank which neither talent nor station does confer on them, and equally with the actually wise and elevated in society they rely on their own wisdom and their own strength of arm. But be the presumption of mortals based upon worldly greatness or not, it is equally destructive to the peace of its victim, equally injurious to the happiness of the hapless one who surrenders his mind captive to its fascination. It warps the understanding, it closes the heart, and lies with a deadening weight upon the spirit in its reach after immortal glory. For no sooner does man endeavour to conquer his self-love with a view of acquiring knowledge, than this incubus drowns the resolution scarcely formed, it presents to the mind the humiliating pos-

ture of confessing one's ignorance, it evokes pride from a thousand sources of mortification: and knowledge is therefore not asked, improvement is not attained.—Objects of pity present themselves, penury holds up her shrivelled hand, her ghastly face: the presumptuous turns away in disgust, for he cannot have his equanimity disturbed by unpleasant scenes. —Religion claims his attention, every fleeting hour admonishes him that life's sands are ebbing unto eternity; but he heeds not, he is occupied with thoughts of self, with pursuits of gain, with indulgence of pleasure, with schemes of aggrandizement. Should he listen to the disquieting voice of admonition which the Holy One has planted in him? can he be diverted from his high aim of worldly ambition and carnal enjoyment by the dread of an end that to him perchance may never come? Assuredly not; and he continues the slave of presumption, the willing captive of an unholy desire for ease and renown, and he remains a stranger in the house of God, an alien to the grace of his Maker.

But wo! wo! man's fortune is not enduring; a mortal's foresight cannot save him from destruction; human wisdom is constantly turned to naught; and though we do bloom like the opening flower in the morning, before the sun goes down we may be cut off and left to wither.—Often has this melancholy fact been presented to our consideration, daily is our attention arrested; but we hide our face from the unwelcome sight, we wish not to be disturbed by those harrowing intruders, painful reflections upon the ills which befall others and may reach us; we banish

such thoughts from our minds, simply because they teach us our own insignificance, and point out but too surely what our end will be. Were it that banishing thought could turn aside the evil; could want of reflection render our body immortal and of ever-returning youthfulness: then indeed might we be justified in living forgetful of our end. But not thinking, not caring, not heeding, render us not exempt from change and grief, and the evil not apprehended will nevertheless come and fulfil its errand. There is no stability in life, no certainty in worldly possessions: whilst we rejoice we are hastening unto death, and the delights we fondly crave pass away like the vision of the night. A thousand instances crowd on the mind as examples which could verify these remarks, and a man must have lived without any reflection and to but little purpose whose recollection is not stored with several instances of this nature. But one pre-eminently awful as a warning occurred not many years since, and it may perhaps be well to call it up from the mass of human sufferings, which history has treasured up as lessons and guides to our better nature.

In a port renowned for its extensive commerce and wealth lay moored a bark of beautiful exterior and extensive dimensions. Her leviathan-like length, her well-appointed machinery, her endearing name, a name which the exile loves to dwell on, which reminds the absent son of the roof of his father, all pointed her out as a desirable means to enable the returning wanderer to reach his "home" speedily and safely. It was in the beginning of autumn, the time appointed for our atonement, the Sabbath pre-

ceding the great day of the forgiveness of sin; and sea, and earth, and sky alike appeared rejoicing in the brilliant light which a glorious sun was shedding on all around. Multitudes assembled upon the deck of the vessel that was so soon to be their only protection, under God, between life and death, and gay faces and happy hearts looked forward to be ere long reunited in restored health to friends they had left several months before. Who thought of impending destruction? of a speedy death? Their path seemed even before them, and the mother spoke cheerfully to the daughter, the brother looked with confident anticipation on the brother, and the faithful wife reminded the husband gaily that soon they would again behold their happy dwelling and their beloved children.—The bark bears her power within herself, she needs not to wait for the fickle wind or the changeful tide; her powerful oars lash the water as though eager for the start, like the neighing steed paws the ground when the martial trumpet calls him to the fight, or the tap of the drum summons him to the race; the hissing steam escapes from the opened valve, and the whole fabric trembles at every joint as if impatient for the word of command which is to release it from its ties to the earth. The word at length is given, and away flies the ship with almost unapproachable speed; and from the shore saluting friends greet the travellers with a final "God be with you," and when the increasing distance quickly conceals them entirely from their aching view, some commend their beloved ones to the keeping of their Father in heaven, whilst others have full reliance upon the skill of the builder and the excellency of

the ship's crew, and in their vanity and confidence of human means they resort not to prayer.

Soon the ocean is reached; and its surface is smooth like a polished mirror, and the widespread waters are smiling all around, and almost invite the traveller to venture abroad on their level plain. Barely a ripple ruffles the sea, as it spangles and glitters against the reflected light of day's bright luminary, and onward hies the bark towards her destined haven with almost unobstructed velocity. But lo! the treacherous element assumes a different aspect; the winds are loosened from their treasures; and the curling waves soon proclaim that the deceitful calm is broken. Now the mariner exerts his skill; he fears a rocky shore, he looks with dread alarm to the gloom which marks but too plainly where destruction would await him. Onward yet staggers the doomed craft, as if conscious that upon her depend the lives and fortunes of many a throbbing heart; she ploughs gallantly through the angry billows; the sinking hopes of the crew are almost reanimated in the fond expectation that the fury of the storm will soon abate; but hark! the crash of timbers tells that the fabric which human hands have so skilfully joined is yielding itself to the blast, to the strength of God's aerial messenger. Still the progress is onward; the element of fire with which the vessel is armed yet battles with the floods without, and though crippled she nevertheless keeps on her way; but this last refuge also is soon taken, and the living fire is quenched by the rising waters which steal into the wreck; and the last hopes of its precious freight are extinguished too. It is night;—the day is the third from

their departure; the hour the close of the Day of Atonement; and many who belong not to the seed of Abraham have unwillingly spent a day of fasting and humiliation in anxious dread because of their peril. And some children of the house of Israel are also there, and see the working of their God in the storm and the billows, their hearts subdued by the display of his might.

The vessel now drifts shoreward, bereft of control over her motion, at the mercy of the storm and waves. The timid maiden claims the protection of the manly youth who stands mute beside her; the wife clings in despair to her husband, as though he could save her; the daughter appeals to the helpless mother, and man asks vainly the aid of a fellow-mortal. But hark again! what betokens this crash? The vessel has struck, she remains immovable, her onward course is checked by the reef on which she lies. Billow after billow strikes the wreck, piece by piece is every joint dissevered, and one long shout of wailing tells that the work of death is done. A hundred human beings are engulfed in one instant of time; and by the friend the maiden sinks; wife and husband linked together go down into the deep, and mother and daughter, who were loving in life, are not separated in death. Few only are left to battle with the sea upon detached planks and broken timbers, fewer yet reach the shore in the gloom of the night, exhausted and benumbed, and are left living witnessess of the goodness of that Providence which rescued them from impending danger, which spared their lives when so many others were taken.—Many families look anxiously forward for the return of a

father, a husband, a mother, a son, a daughter, a sister, and a brother; but these come not, and no more in this world will they meet the beloved, not even will their eyes be permitted to look upon the face of the dead, which the ocean will not yield up till the graves are opened unto everlasting resurrection; and long will many a bereaved household dwell with grief upon the recollection of the wreck of the HOME.

It was not, brethren, for the purpose of telling you a tale of wo, that I have called your attention to this sorrowful recital; but only to ask you to let it awaken in you reflections upon the uncertainty of your earthly existence. Would the many that perished on that melancholy occasion have ventured upon the deck of the frail vessel which became their grave, had they known their danger? and yet they ventured thither full of confidence, calculating with certainty to meet their friends in the course of three or four days. If any one had called upon them before their embarkation and admonished them to repent of their wickedness, because in less than a week they would be summoned before the great Judge of all: would they have heeded? would they not have called the preacher an alarmist? a false prophet of evil? Still their security would have been imaginary, and their deferred repentance been no safeguard against the evil which had been decreed.—Our end does approach, our death will come, whether our life has been well or ill-spent; the dissolution of the connexion between body and soul is the common fate of the good and the wicked, of him who feared God, and of him who did not serve his Maker. But how different is the condition

of the one from that of the other! The servant of God sees his end draw near, and his stay is in the Lord; with his last expiring breath he sanctifies his Creator; he rejoices in the coming reunion, and he breathes forth his spirit with "The Lord is One" upon his tongue in a perfect reliance of a better world, where there is no pain, no sorrow! The sinner, however, stands upon the threshold of eternity in doubt, and trembling; he fears to quit this life, because he has no hope of joys hereafter; his unwilling spirit trembles as it is summoned, and the feeble prayer, haply too late essayed, dies away unuttered amidst the agonies of a violent death or the pain of helpless maladies. Do we, however, attend well to this consideration? is our conduct such as reason would ask? do we choose wisely? are we servants in the house of the Lord, or are we unwilling and but occasional attendants? how does the account of our sins stand with which our soul is loaded?—Alas! we regard but rarely our perishable state, and we act as though we were immortal, or, if mortal, unaccountable. We venture heedlessly upon the bark of life, we are impatient to commence a brilliant course, we wince under restraint, and trusting to the apparent strength and security of our position we hasten upon the broad expanse which the world opens to our charmed view. How gay and bright every thing appears in the heyday of youth! how unruffled, how calm does the ocean of life seem to our sight! we dream not there is danger, we heed not the quicksands and rocks which beset our career. Speak to us of caution, we scorn the thought; remind us of the duties of religion, we laugh at the folly as we term

it of doting age, at the superstition of frosty years; we deem ourselves wise above the ancients, more intelligent than were our fathers before us; we wish not to know the law of God, our own reason we think sufficient to guide us rightly; we care not to bow at the altar where our brothers worship; for we ask not heavenly aid to bless our undertakings.—It is well;—God is long-suffering, He punishes not instantly the sinner in his transgressing, and years roll on, and we imagine that we have fairly proved, "that we can tempt God and yet escape." But our calm is deceitful, the apparent beauty and elegant proportions of the bark in which we have trusted are delusive, and the storm of adversity will assail us ere we heed its approach. We may struggle a while against the contending billows; we may essay, in our confidence upon our own strength, to avoid the destruction which we see impending; but in vain! we contend against One far too mighty for our feebleness; we strive against the decree of unerring Wisdom, and lo! the fire of our resistance is quenched by the accumulating ills that beset us, and our bark lies broken upon an inhospitable shore, and we are driven from our security, floating, so to say, upon some portion of a wreck at the mercy of the waves, which are curling and wreathing over our devoted heads.

Happy indeed would we be, if amidst adversity we would return and seek the Lord and his strength; if we would learn to break the stubbornness of our hearts when chastisement has awakened our attention. But unfortunately our memory of things once endured is very short; the effect of calamity as an improver of the heart is soon blotted out; and as the shipwrecked

mariner, who alone survives of an entire crew, will immediately, on his wound being healed, again brave the treacherous main: so do we throw off the recollection of sufferings when healing has been vouchsafed to our sorrows; we sin anew, unmindful of the Power that fain would teach us wisdom,—as Pharaoh of old, who transgressed again when he was no longer terrified by the unusual voice of the thunder, the flashes of lightning, the murderous hailstones, and the sweeping rain. Yes, the flood of adversity is past, and the good resolution we had formed is also vanished; we go on as we were wont to do, and we stand with a bold front, daring sinners, in the presence of the merciful Creator; we brave afresh his terrors, forgetful that though of unending kindness He is an upright Judge, who suffers no evil to go unpunished. Whilst suffering, we perceived as it were dimly that we are mortal; whilst calamities assailed us, we yielded that our power is not all-sufficient; whilst the weight of sorrow pressed heavily on our spirit, we discovered that our reason can become clouded and uncertain. But now we presume again to tread ambition's path heedless of our end; we dive into business speculation, as though we could command success; we are again confident in our wisdom; we again press onward, contemning the wisdom of God, relying on our own judgment as infallible. What else remains for a merciful Providence but to afflict us again, and to renew the admonition which we once neglected?

You will thus see, beloved brethren, that the calamities of life are the messengers of peace, the monitors of better things, which are to fit the spirit for a happier and better life. Mercies make us but more

confident of our own prowess, more relying on our own wisdom; but adversities prove to us the nothingness of all we cling to: the ills of life strip it of its delusive colours, and point out to us where our safety lies, where the haven is prepared to offer us refuge against the fury of the storm. Therefore, says Moses in his prayer: "Thou turnest men to contrition, and sayest, Return, ye children of men;" meaning, that the dispensation of woes will lead us to offer the sacrifice of a contrite heart to our Maker, who then will be graciously ready to receive back into his paternal embrace the returning children of men, though they have grievously sinned. It is in his dispensations that God speaketh to us, and well it is for us if we have arrived at such a state of holiness and humility that, like the bee which extracts honey from every flower, we are able to learn wisdom and a lesson of piety from every punishment which is sent to try our constancy.—Therefore also continues the prophet: "Teach us to number our days," meaning, he prays that God may make us sensible of our perishable nature, that He may instil in our mind the conviction that our days are numbered—numbered and limited by the indisputable will of our Creator, and that all our striving, all our working, all our reaching after greatness, all our hastening after wealth, all our lust for renown, will be cut short by the enemy that lies in wait for us unperceived upon every step we take, ready at all moments to bear us hence whenever we are summoned. Yes, he earnestly entreats for grace to assist us to humble ourselves as becomes mortals before the undying One; and he adds, therefore, "that we may apply our hearts to wisdom." Does he mean

that worldly wisdom which consists only in an accumulation of ideas derived from others, a great and general knowledge of the structure of various languages, a comprehensive understanding of scientific things, or that peculiar perception of merely tangible results which enables the merchant to dispose of his wares to the best advantage, and stimulates man to try various schemes for the acquisition of wealth? By no means; for such wisdom, useful though it be in its own peculiar province, is not that which will assist us to number our days; it is not that wisdom which can teach us how to make our peace with our Maker. The wisdom for which Moses prayed is the knowledge of our own relation to God, is the clear perception of the duties which it behoves the creature to assume as the child of the great Parent. As we read elsewhere (Job xxviii. 27): "And He said to man, Behold! to fear the Lord is wisdom, and to eschew evil is understanding." If we are endowed with this wisdom, if our understanding has reached this point of perfection, we can then look upon our life with correct views; all our acts will then be for the glorification of the Lord, and even our daily toil, which we pursue for the support of our bodily functions, will then have a holy object, that is, we will labour in our calling cheerfully, willingly, relying upon the mercy of God to prosper our undertaking as He may deem best, and we will then not repine if our well-matured schemes fail to answer our expectations.—This wisdom will teach us to moderate our desires, it will enable us to restrain our passions, and to confine all our actions within the limits of the law of God. It will assist us so to number our days that,

looking upon each of them as a step nearer to dissolution, we shall become anxious to mark it with a virtuous deed which is to speak for us upon the book of memorial before the Lord of those that fear Him and think upon his name; in order that, when our race is run, there may not be a single day which could accuse us of having neglected to offer on it an acceptable deed to the Deity.

But, brethren, is this our conduct? does not many a day pass in utter forgetfulness of God's holy law? do we not offend daily in our body, in our possessions, in our spirit? How many of us are there who regard not the Sabbath and the festivals, who continue their labours on the days when labour is sinful, not minding the commandment which bids them rest, because the wisdom of God has so ordained it? They imagine that their wealth will be increased by constant toil, by unceasing attention to business; the Sabbath therefore comes, ushering in rest and joy to the servants of the Lord, but it brings no rest, no joy to them; the house of prayer receives the devout worshippers, but they are away; they bear publicly burdens from their houses on the Sabbath; their places of business are open; the usual enticements to the passers by are exposed; their workshops are not closed, their tools and implements of trade are not unemployed, and they restrain not their feet on the day of rest, but they pursue journeys, attend to their avocations, and will not put faith in the words of their God, who promises to bless their repose from bodily labour on the day devoted to his service. How many excuses are framed for such iniquity! If one is poor, he avers that he cannot live without being constantly

employed; and if our substance is great, and our engagements extensive, then we cannot spare the time, we would be too great losers by an obedience to one of the Ten Commandments. So fruitful in inventions is our sinful propensity! They therefore among us, who place so high a value upon the world and its allurements, will find excuses enough to satisfy themselves for their wrong-doing. But let them beware! They deceive not by such miserable pretences the Searcher of hearts; He will judge of their doings according to their merit; and their neglecting his precepts, their pretended unbelief of their necessity and usefulness will not screen them from responsibility. Yet men say, that they see no evil in their conduct, while they offend by omitting their duties at the recurrence of the appointed time; while but rarely does some special occasion summon them to acts of worship, to a presence in the house of prayer; while they are strangers so to say in the mansion of their Father, and they will not receive, they will not taste the food of life, which He so abundantly, so bountifully supplies. Religious wisdom is preached to them, truth appeals to their understanding; but they turn a deaf ear, they will not listen. Is this the course of wisdom? do you call that numbering your days? The rather it seems to say, that you think yourselves enduring, immovable to eternity, forgetful that you are but of yesterday, and will speedily return to your native dust.

Again, in the pursuit of carnal indulgence, in the use of forbidden food, in the revelling in benumbing drink, how do we miss the goal of our being! We will not restrain desires, till they have degenerated

into sinful passions; we will swallow whatever food our palate may crave; we will drink our fill, because the wine looks so tempting. And this you call rational worship? Is the service of the desires a thing so well becoming accountable humanity? You forget that you live only through God's bounty; but consider that what his law declares good and innocent is alone good and allowable; there is nothing right which this law declares wrong, there is nothing allowed which its precepts prohibit.

In our possessions too we often offend. We are commanded to love our neighbour like ourselves; and still we fail in obedience to this primary injunction. We expect justice, honesty, and fair-dealing from others; we blame them if they injure us; we are wroth if our honest demands are not attended to, if our just dues are withheld. But we do not regard others' right in the same point of view; we are overreaching, cunning in our commerce with our fellows, and apt to trample on their rights, and to remain deaf to their remonstrance. Self is uppermost, neighbourly love and fellowship are disregarded. The demon of gain, the unclean spirit of injustice reign triumphant in our souls; and we will not hearken to the poor when he suppliantly appeals to our bounty; we will not do justice to the orphan, the widow, and the stranger, because there is no one to plead in their behalf. And is this wisdom? shall we number our days with deeds of avarice, of cruelty, of oppression, of fraud, of iniquity, of injustice? shall such be the works which are to open to us the gates of paradise?

In our spirit too.—How often does devotion yield

to a rebellious thought? Do we not many a time arraign the justice of the Lord? If any misfortune comes to our lot, we imagine ourselves ill-used; does not success attend all our plans, we regard ourselves as overlooked by Providence. Then too are the sins of pride, arrogance, overbearing conduct to equals and inferiors, disobedience to our parents and teachers, avarice, covetousness, and the contempt of lawful authority: all these prove that our soul is not untainted with the leaven of rebellion against the divine rule; that we imagine ourselves raised above the level of mankind, and that we claim a prerogative which is not justly ours, and which has never been conceded to us by the Lord, who alone can confer power on man. It is thus we transgress in our spirit; because feelings like the above are prohibited in the law, and are consequently sinful, and will bar for us the portals of salvation; since sentiments of this nature are not only wrong in themselves, but they prompt us likewise to actions which are in direct opposition to the precepts of Scripture.

Dark indeed is the picture which the moralist must, in deference to truth, draw of the world before him. God has made every thing beautiful; all things work for a wise end; everywhere reigns order; in all we discover the effect of design. But it is man alone who mars the harmony of nature; it is he alone who rises in disobedience above the divine ordinances of the Bible, who sets up his own conceits, his own false notions above the truth that has endured for ages, and will outlast this globe we live on. Our puerile conception of what we understand, of what we pretend to call right and just, we set above the divine wisdom

manifested in the Revelation on Sinai, and we harden our heart, we avert our eyes, that we may not perchance unknowingly imbibe true knowledge. But, brethren, it is not well that this is so; each of us, every one here assembled, has the means in his own power, has the weapon in his own hands, to combat the enemy to his everlasting peace. Let us but lay aside our presumption; let us but turn a willing ear to the guidance of God; let us but regard all men as equal, ourselves as fallible and mortal; search for wisdom in the law made known through Moses and the prophets; be humble in spirit, just in our dealings, eager in the pursuit of truth, firm in faith, and righteous in our religious actions: and we stand regenerated, disenthralled, we also will then form a beautiful link in the divine creation, our body and our spirit will be holy to God, our deeds and our thoughts witnessess of his goodness and glory.

How grieved would you all be, brethren and friends! were you to be certain that you would be cut off in the midst of your sins, unprepared, unatoned! How horrible would be the weight, which a conviction of the enduring displeasure of the Creator would cast on your souls! And still are not many acting as though they cared not about the load of sin which they are heaping up? are there not many who brave the Creator's displeasure by their neglect of his precepts, by the estrangement from his service? But say they: "We do not rebel, we know God is merciful; He will not take us away in the midst of our transgressions; we have yet ample time to repent, and to make our peace before we die!" If any one here present thinks so, he greatly errs. God is mer-

ciful, but this is no warrant for our transgressing; He may not strike man with instant death, when he knowingly and wilfully sins; but let no one imagine that it is wise to defer repentance from day to day; we have no guarantee, no surety in life; every moment may be our last; a thousand agents are at every period ready to cut short our days, and the opportunity for amendmant, once neglected, may never again be offered. Be warned therefore whilst it is yet time; at once resolve to act as Israelites, as servants of the Most High; pause, reflect, and sin no more. The hand of Mercy is ever outstretched to receive the returning child: grasp it now, hold it fast for ever, it is your only stay in sorrow, your only support at the hour of death. Heed you the voice which calls to you? discover you not the goodness that wishes to teach you? It is your God whose voice you hear, He speaks through your conscience, through the Scriptures which He gave you as an inheritance, through the instruction which is conveyed to you by his servants. It is the Creator whose goodness surrounds you while waking, while sleeping; mid joy, mid sorrow; in health, in sickness; through life, through the hour of death. Come, arouse ye! become his servants; remember the Sabbath to keep it holy; observe the festivals, the sign of the Eternal's power, of your debt of gratitude as sons of Israel; be holy in your persons; touch not the food which the law forbids; be humble before your Maker, be confident only in his wisdom; and above all love your neighbour like yourselves, and devote to God every hour of your life, and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul. Then will you be accepted, and

in accordance with the words of the prophet you will, in the blessed existence which awaits the righteous, "renew your strength, you will mount up with wings, as eagles, you will run and not be weary, and you will walk and not become faint." In this manner your youth will ever last, your strength will never fail; and this will be your sure reward, if you have learnt well to number your days, and have applied your hearts to wisdom.

Lord of all! guide us, teach us, to know thy ways: bless us with thy goodness, satisfy us with thy bounty. Let thy words be sweet to our ears, that we may drink of their refreshing stream which leads unto happiness. Let us live to see the wonders of thy law, and close not our days, until we have been spared and admonished to return unto Thee with a perfect heart and a sincere repentance. Subdue our soul, that it may devote itself entirely to Thee, and take not from us thy liberal spirit of grace and holiness, and remove from our path the obstacles which strive to lead us astray; in order that all Israel may learn to walk in thy ordinances all the days of their perishable life. And may the merits of our forefathers plead for us their descendants, and let the redeemer come to Zion, even thy servant David, under whose shadow we shall live securely among nations. Amen.

Nissan 12th. } 5600
April 15th. }

NOTE.—In explanation of the account of the distressing catastrophe introduced into the above Discourse, I will briefly state that the steam-packet Home, Captain White, departed from New York for Charleston on, I believe, her second voyage, on Sabbath afternoon the 7th of October, 1837, and after encountering the furious gale I

have attempted to describe, went ashore near one of the capes in North Carolina some time in the evening of Monday the 9th, being as I stated about the close of the Day of Atonement. Out of *ninety* passengers *twenty* only reached the shore; among those lost were at least three Jewish females and one man belonging to our people, and among those saved was but one Jewish gentleman, who saw his brother swept off from the wreck without being able to render him the least assistance; he yet survives (5601), and I obtained from him several of the particulars as I have related them. The crew consisted of *forty-five* persons, of whom but twenty were saved, including the captain.—As this heart-rending occurrence was one of those great exhibitions of human weakness when contending against the agents of the Creator which we sometimes witness: I thought myself justified in offering it to the consideration of the brethren as an incentive to reflection upon the uncertainty of human life and the instability of our fancied security; although I fear that it may recall painful recollections in the minds of several who have cause to remember the friends that perished in the wreck of the Home.—During the same storm another steam-ship was on its way from Philadelphia to Charleston. It too bore among its passengers a number of Israelites, who beheld in their rescue from impending danger, when the water had already penetrated at the cabin, and was washing furiously over the deck, the wonder of the Lord in the mighty deep. Altogether, it was a fearful close of the great fast, near Cape Hatteras, one which few have ever experienced and escaped.

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE REVELATION ON SINAI.

(PENTECOST, 5600.)

THINE, O Lord! are the power and the glory, and all on earth obeys thy sway; and there too, whither our eyes cannot reach, nor our understanding penetrate, Thou reignest in majesty supreme. Spirits

bright around thy throne are standing, cherubim great to Thee bend the knee; yet unto them also, and to those that up-bear thy mercy-seat art Thou concealed, a mystery too great to be by them solved. How then can the son of earth dare to ask, "What art Thou?" how dare a mortal inquire, "What doest Thou?" Yet despite our lowliness and thy awful exaltation, it did please Thee in former days to descend in thy glory upon the mountain in the desert whither Thou hadst led our forefathers, and to give there unto them the commandments and statutes which Thou hadst ordained for our salvation. It was then that thy goodness was made manifest; it was then that mankind were informed how to live in obedience to thy behests; and we, thy people Israel, were chosen to be a beacon unto all other men, teaching by our existence, proclaiming by our permanence, that Thou, O our Father! art God alone, and that Thou art indeed the Creator, Ruler, and Saviour of all the works of thy hands. Do Thou again this day and all the days of our being renew in our souls the fear and love to Thee! again proclaim to our spirits thy pure and holy word! cleanse us, that we may be made obedient, and stretch forth thy guiding hand that, like innocent children under the guidance of the father, we may be received again in thy dwelling in purity and innocence, when our souls are demanded back unto Thee, and our bodies are laid in the silent grave there to rest till thy creative word calls us forth anew unto life everlasting. May this be thy will. Amen.

Brethren!

On a day like this, when we are assembled to thank

the Lord at the time of our festivity for his mercy in giving us his laws and statutes, it is well becoming in every son of Israel to dwell for a space upon the benefits resulting from the event which we celebrate. Were it, that the Pentecost had been instituted to commemorate the slaughter of myriads of enemies, the conquest of a thousand cities, the subduing of numerous nations to our rule: then indeed might there be many who would feel that they could not rejoice at our rejoicing, who could experience grief only at our success. But the Pentecost, and in truth all our festivals, stand alone in that from all other festivals; we celebrate not the disruption of political communities; the origin of a sect; the birth of an individual; the conquest of our party and the downfall of our antagonists:—no! we celebrate the goodness of God, we rejoice because of his salvation; we return thanks for a people redeemed, for a world regenerated! Yes, our fathers had been taken from the midst of another people, their tyrants and oppressors; they were tainted with many vices, corrupted by the leaven of idolatry, subdued by the superstition of priestcraft. Their bodies, it is true, had been withdrawn from the bondage of Egyptian taskmasters, but their spirits were not yet disenthralled; the flesh was free, but the soul yet lingered under the most cruel slavery. In what were we then distinguished from other nations? only in the merit of our patriarchal ancestors and the submission with which we had followed our God into the desert and through the waves of the Arabian Sea. We had proved that we could confide in the Lord; we had shown that we were ready to receive the heavenly yoke, the law, which should

henceforward render us the servants only of Heaven, controlled by and enslaved to no human power. And this alone had been the object of Providence in his sending Moses to ask of Pharaoh the liberation of the Israelites, and this had been the reason why so many astounding miracles were performed to effect the demand made by the prophet, in order to demonstrate to the satisfaction of all the overruling power and wisdom of the Lord.

It is known to you that, true to human nature, Pharaoh would not listen to forego what he thought his rights to the services of the Israelites; he hurled contempt at Moses and Aaron when they addressed him in the name of an unknown God; he refused to regard the threats of the Everlasting One of whom his false priests had never spoken, believing himself secure in the recesses of his palaces, in the multitude of his retinue, from the vengeance of a Deity of whose existence he professed to know nothing. He had been taught to regard his own will as supreme; his priests spoke of a multitude of gods, of antagonizing principles, who shared the rule of the world; creature and Creator were mixed up in his philosophy, and the truth, if any there was in his system, was choked by the rank weeds of fable and human invention. In all his land the gigantic images of monstrous malformations and of animals, be they man, quadruped, bird, amphibious or insect, were adored, as emblems, if you will, but still adored as images of deified things. A caste of priests, selected and set apart from all the rest of the people, had the custody of all the avenues of information and knowledge; devices, many and varied, had been introduced, fraud and trick resorted

to, to give stability to the opinions which they professed, and even from the burdens of the state had they been freed* from time immemorial. Systems, somewhat different, but nowise better, had taken root in all other lands; one nation worshipped stocks and stones; another incarnations of their deities; another the starry firmament, the works of the Author of all; another a spirit of good and a spirit of evil; another yet, the monstrous product of some mischievous brain, on whose extended heated arms innocent children were by their parents roasted alive as acceptable sacrifices. Nowhere then was a nation who called on the God who had appeared unto Abraham; nowhere was there a people who adored the Creator and Ruler of all things. Do you therefore wonder that Pharaoh resisted the divine command? It would have been incredible, if the Scriptures had recorded that he had obeyed; we might then have alleged that it is impossible to believe that the king of Egypt could have paid any regard to the injunctions of a Deity to whom neither he nor the surrounding nations paid any allegiance. Yet, it was necessary that in accordance with the promises made to Abraham the Israelites should not only be let go free, but that all the other nations likewise should through them be blessed. It therefore did happen, that God the Lord, who had announced his being and his command, did not suffer Pharaoh to remain long in ignorance of his power. He could, if so He had chosen, have taken the Israelites out of Egypt without punishing the Egyptians and without any delay; for, to suppose otherwise

* See Genesis xlvii. 22.

would be limiting the power of Him who is the Supreme. But if this procedure had been adopted, there would necessarily have been but little instruction afforded both to Israelites and Egyptians; for the first would only have seen in their liberation an act of extraordinary goodness of some unknown invisible Power, who though kind and powerful might be indifferent about obedience and submission to his will; and the latter would have regarded it doubtless as a display of a great superiority over the civil authority of their land, but still might have been left in doubt whether the new Deity had any absolute superiority in a long contest over their acknowledged divinities. But the Lord wished to instruct, to chastise, to correct, to enlighten; He wanted not merely to redeem the Israelites according to his promise, but to prove also to them and their masters, that there exists One of unending goodness, of infinite power, to whom all must yield obedience; that He is not only good, but also watchful over the affairs of man; not alone beneficent, but likewise heeding of justice, even-handed justice, and that retribution is a part of his economy no less than it accords with his uprightness to reward and to favour the good; and lastly, that his might is not merely the display of a momentary superiority over civil rulers, but that it extends over all that exists, over all that can have being; that there is no material thing, no spiritual being, that is not subject to his control, destructible at his bidding.

Heathens, the most enlightened even, imagined that there existed local deities, tutelary powers, over certain places and countries, independent of each other, and not seldom engaged, mortal-like, in a con-

flict for the superiority. Were it necessary it would be easy enough to produce innumerable instances from profane history as well as Scripture to prove this fact; but independently of its leading us too far into historical researches, the house of God is not the place to open such a discussion; for the subject is connected with too many immoralities, and exhibits too glaringly the degraded state of human reason when unassisted by divine wisdom, not to give, when viewed at large, more disgust than instruction. Enough, that heathens regarded the earth, the sky, the sea, the infernal regions, the sun, every separate planet, as beings capable of working their pleasure under the sole limitation of some chief among them, and subject to the decrees of an inevitable fate, WHATEVER THIS MIGHT BE. If therefore any event occurred, it was easy enough for the priests of falsehood to ascribe the cause to the temporary prevalence of some one or more of their numerous tutelary objects of worship. Moreover the idolaters of the olden days never objected to accept a new deity among and in addition to their long catalogue, provided, they could be made to believe that the new claimant of adoration possessed some power for good or evil. They did not perhaps change their former gods, but they certainly admitted the power and dignity of the new claimants that were offered to them. A remarkable instance of this fallacy (where a special and local power was admitted) is found in the twentieth chapter of the first book of Kings. Ben-hadad, king of Syria, had made an attack upon Samaria, the capital of Ahab, the sinful king of Israel. Unexpectedly both to Ahab and Benhadad the latter was signally defeated in a sortie made

by a small number of devoted young men, by direction of a prophet, in order to convince the unworthy chief of God's people, that it is only by the assistance of the Lord that the affairs of man are directed. Ben-hadad's servants were likewise convinced that, in agreement with facts recorded in history, it had pleased the Lord to grant victory to the arms of Israel, though they were at that time deeply sunk into idolatry. But whilst they admitted the power of Israel's God, they fancied that it was not universal; and they therefore spoke to their master: "Their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plains, and surely we shall be stronger than they." They accordingly persuaded the king of Syria to renew his attack, but to select a plain for his battle-ground, hoping thereby to prevail through the power of their gods of the plain over the mountain-gods of Israel. We now read in continuation: "And there came a man of God, and spoke unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thy hands, and ye shall know that I am the Lord." Of course the prediction was fulfilled, and the slaughtered thousands testified that the power of our God is not limited by, nor confined, to any place or station.—It would be easy to extend these observations, and furnish you innumerable specimens from profane books; but it is needless for our purpose; for the subject is not new to you, and all that was intended to be proved is, that heathenism in its greatest perfection, in ancient times as well as in the more modern

had always about the same idea of the ability of God to effect his purposes,—that is to say, the idolaters divided the authority, which the Scriptures teach us to ascribe to the Omnipotent alone, among the various and independent individuals which figure in their so-called mythology.

As it was now the intention of God to erect the descendants of Israel into a people holy to his services, it was but proper to imbue their minds at the outset with convincing proofs of his omnipotence. He therefore did not merely effect their liberation by a solitary exhibition of superior power, which as we have said it was possible for Him to do; but He permitted the stubbornness of Pharaoh to yield by degrees only to the conviction which was wrought gradually through the exhibition of deeds, which showed beyond the possibility of doubt the utter insignificance of all the gods of Egypt to do the least in warding off, or staying, or diminishing any of the inflictions which it pleased God to send. The river rolled seaward in one bloody stream, the fishes it harboured were thrown dead upon the pestilential shore; but the healthy flood only returned upon the bidding of the Lord. Frogs in disgusting swarms insinuated themselves everywhere; but they quitted the afflicted land only when the prophet prayed to God to spare his treacherous enemies. Noxious insects and savage beasts desolated the plains of the sons of Ham; a pestilence swept off the cattle of the Egyptians, whilst of Israel's not one died; terrible blains infected the bodies of the priests even; hail in destructive masses desolated the fields, locusts devoured what the hail had spared; and still it was only

the prophet's supplication that afforded enlargement. At bright daylight too the sun was darkened; for three days impenetrable gloom rested on the dwellings of the Egyptians; and still no power save the Lord's granted relief. And lastly the terrible slaughter of the first-born and the demolition by invisible hands of the statues of idols told in language not to be misunderstood, that to our God alone belongeth the kingdom, and that his rule extendeth over all. The whole display of these miraculous events must therefore have impressed upon the minds of Israelites as well as of Egyptians, that the Power which set Israel free is a universal Power, a Deity not only of mountains, but also of valleys; not a God merely of light, but also the God of darkness; not alone the Dispenser of life, but also the Dispenser of death; in short the universal God, the sole Creator, the only Ruler!—And so we read (Exodus ix. 15, 16): "For if I had desired I could have stretched out my hand, and smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence, and thou wouldst have been cut off from the earth. But for this cause did I suffer thee to remain, in order to show thee my power, and in order to declare my name throughout all the earth." We therefore see, that the lessons in obedience to the divine command conveyed to him by Moses which Pharaoh received were the only natural way, though the means employed were miraculous, to force conviction upon his obdurate heart; and these means produced at length the effect which the Lord had in view, and the Israelites were driven forth from Egypt to meet their destinies in the desert of Arabia.

Let us consider: If Pharaoh had in this manner

been instructed and taught how great, how irresistible God is, the same lesson must naturally have been impressed upon his own people and the Israelites also; for the former had shared the punishment of their king, and the latter had been those in whose behalf all these great and fearful things had been done.—With this knowledge the Israelites arrived at the shore of the Red Sea. But still their confidence was not completely established; they were terrified because of the horsemen and chariots of their pursuers, and they deplored that they had not remained the willing slaves of the Egyptians. These too had speedily forgotten their sufferings no less than the others their deliverance. Again therefore a mighty deed was done; the waters divided, being piled up like walls by the storm-wind of the Lord: Jacob's sons passed through on dry land, and they who threatened to enslave them again to hopeless servitude were overturned amid the returning billows. Fainthearted-ness then fled, when the shore was strewn with the bodies of the horse and his rider, "and the people feared the Lord, and they trusted in the Lord and in his servant Moses."

All this mighty work of God had well prepared the Israelites to acknowledge Him the Lord as their Sovereign; for to Him alone were they indebted, almost despite of themselves, for their freedom, for their glorious liberty, which now cheered them on. They might now speak how for their sakes great deeds had been done, how their trusty leader had exhibited a power which humbled a great king, and brought a whole people to repentance. An insidious enemy too, who had surprised them with his armed

bands, had been signally overcome by the blessed prowess of the young disciple of Moses. Farther, when they asked for bread, it was bounteously showered down to them without requiring of them ploughing or reaping; and when water was needed, in a land sterile and dry, the flinty rock yielded the refreshing element. After all these things had been accomplished, when every day almost had given them new inducements for thankfulness and admiration: our ancestors were brought to the foot of Horeb, where, as had been foretold, they should be taught how to serve their God. And now continues the text (Exodus xix.) as follows: "And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him from the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, Ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be unto me a peculiar treasure above all nations; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Here are clearly stated the reasons of the redemption and the terms of the covenant. Says the text, "Ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians." You yourselves were witnesses of my power; it is not upon hearsay you are to acknowledge my omnipotence—it is not a doubtful authority which you are to regard; for you, in your own persons, were the recipients of the bounty, witnesses of the glory of your God, that you might

know that I, even I alone, am the Being who cast down and exalt, the sole Almighty, to whom all must submit. You also experienced my protection after you had quitted the land of your servitude. You were surrounded by dangers, before you the sea, behind you the vengeful host of the pursuing tyrant; again Amalek attacked you, when you thought only of pursuing in quiet your way; but you were borne aloft, clear of all obstruction, by your God and Saviour; like the eagle, who soaring in his flight above the whole feathered tribe, bears away her young to a place of safety, interposing her own body to the dart of the fowler: thus were you shielded, protected, and saved. But if you ask, "Why was this done?" then know, that to your ancestors I had sworn that I would redeem you when the time of your wandering had expired, to raise you up to be my people. It is for the fulfilment of this promise that I bared my arm against your oppressors; that I smote them with many plagues; that I humbled the pride of idolaters; that I proved the helplessness of the idols they worship, in order to teach you to regard me alone as your God, who alone am holy, who alone am able to save. It is now at your own option to merit my blessing, by this, that you rigidly obey the commandments which I am about to offer to your acceptance, and to do on your part all that your God can ask of you as the people who have entered into a covenant with Him, to do his behests for the protection which will be vouchsafed to you. It is not any benefit for myself which I ask; for all the earth is mine; you cannot benefit me; your virtue, your righteousness cannot

render my happiness and my perfection more complete than they now are; but all the good which is to result is to revert to yourselves; you shall be a treasure more than all the nations of the earth; more favoured, more instructed, more holy, more beloved, but also more watched, more accountable for all your doings, because having more light and being nearer to me, you must expect to receive retribution whenever you merit it. Says the verse, "For all the earth is mine." I have reared you under trouble and tribulation to know that I am the Lord, capable to do all that my will desires; you have learnt this lesson more than any other people; therefore in my wisdom do I now appoint you, if you are willing, to receive my law, my covenant, which you are to keep sacred and untouched, as your birthright, your inheritance, as men of the house of Israel, and which will at length be THE blessing to all the earth, which I announced to your fathers.

Thus spoke the Lord of Hosts. Moses descended from the mount and announced the word with which he had been charged. It is possible, nay probable, that the people had all along believed that they were merely to offer sacrifices, after the manner of their ancestors, to the Lord after their deliverance; but they could hardly have known that a new dispensation was to be intrusted to their safekeeping. How great, therefore, must have been their joy when their high destiny was announced to them, and with how much willingness must they have answered: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." The Father of all received in favour the reply with which the prophet was charged, and He spoke as follows:

הנה אנכי בא אליך בעב הענן בעבור ישמע העם
בדברי עמך וגם בך יאמינו לעולם : שכות יט' ט' :

"Behold I will come unto thee in a thick cloud, for the sake that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and that also in thee they shall believe for ever." Exodus xix. 9.

The people having signified their readiness to become the servants of the Lord, He informed Moses, that the legislation should be public, that the whole entire nation should be the witnesses of their spiritual as they had been of their bodily disenthralment; so that not one should have occasion to tell the other what are the doctrines of salvation. Another reason for this procedure should be the attestation of the truth of Moses, who had been the instrument of their redemption. God intended to crown him publicly with the attribute of faithfulness, to impress upon all that he was a righteous servant, and to insure that whatever he might hereafter be deputed to teach should be received by his brothers as the truth received from God.

The third day after this annunciation the people were aroused by the loud voice of thunder; fires flashed from amidst the deepest gloom, the earth shook, the mountain trembled, the Israelites were awestruck, and he alone who was called "faithful in all God's house," was calm and intent on the issue of his mission. He led forth the people to meet their God, and in silent expectation they stood at the foot of Sinai. Soon a voice resounded, a voice unlike that of a mortal; it penetrated to every ear, it struck to every heart, it moved every spirit. All the people

heard, remember this, that more than two millions of human beings heard at the same moment in an audible manner the selfsame voice; there was consequently no room for doubt or uncertainty, for all was made manifest, perceptible, and clear; and the voice which then spoke still reëchoes again and again to this very day. Truths, never before so comprehensively given, were surrendered, so to say, from the treasury of Heaven to the custody of the Israelites, and well was the custodian chosen. What revolutions have passed over our heads! how much misery has fallen to our lot! what persecutions had we to endure! but still the covenant is ours, its words are dear to our hearts, its precepts find a response in our bosoms. Do I exaggerate? where is the Israelite, who deserves the name, but is willing to suffer for the glorious inheritance which is his? where is the son of Jacob, who is so in truth, but calls the law of God his greatest treasure? Men may call us enthusiasts for saying this; but who can be otherwise than an enthusiast when the contemplation of the great blessing of our religion is presented to his mind? It is more than our native land; it is more than our earthly parents; it is the bond of union which unites us to our everlasting home, which binds the humble creature to the infinite Creator! to the everliving Father!

Now mark, brothers and sisters of the house of Israel, who are here to-day to celebrate this great event, how well the prediction has been fulfilled. It is to-day more than thirty-two hundred years ago since the promulgation of the law. A hundred generations and more have been gathered to their fathers since the fire of glory blazed on Mount Sinai. There

is no visible trace left of this great event on Horeb; no monument, to mark the spot where Moses stood; no house of worship is there where the Israelites could adore; the tables of the covenant are no longer known among us; and all our glory—all,—all is gone, for the temple too which our fathers thrice upreared is destroyed, gone, vanished. And Israel? they have wandered through deserts and mountains, crossed the wide ocean, been scattered away among a thousand isles. It appeared at one time as though death were their only guardian, the grave their only refuge from the many bitter, scalding calamities which seemed to be entailed upon them for their sins. As I said, all, all is gone; the outward glory of our race has been cast down to the ground, and all that remains is the VOICE which we heard on this day. Amidst all our sorrows THIS never left us, it was ever near to us in all our wanderings, it always cheered our drooping spirits when we fainted under the exhausting influence of our own apostacies and the gentiles' persecution. Yes, brethren, nations mightier and more numerous than we ever were, whose memorials are written in splendid ruins and memorable remains of architecture, of sculpture, and of arts; who had thousands of temples for our one; whose arms and prowess subjugated many and powerful nations, have passed away, as though they had not been, and of some their very names have been forgotten. But it was not our might, our numbers, our conquests, our architecture, our sculpture, our arts, that upheld us, it was the possession of the heavenly truth, that characterized us always from other men. There may be those among us who value it not; though it is hardly

credible that any son of Jacob can be so forgetful of what is the source of his salvation. But be the apostates ever so many, be their motives fear, interest, ambition, or unbelief: of this we are assured, that the law will never be forgotten, that that time will never be, when the mass of our people will cease to regard Moses as the prophet of God, and to believe in the truth of his mission; for the word which has endured unscathed so many vicissitudes is yet endowed with life, and exists this day in its original vigour and beauty.

But shall it be said that, as we advance in civilization and are more favoured with liberty, we are becoming indifferent to this blessing? shall the reproach be cast on us, that we cannot be intrusted with civil freedom without losing our character as Jews? The foul charge has been made; and they who wish to annihilate our people, have at times counselled to place us on a political equality, in order to consume us by a gradual admixture with foreign nations. They aver, that the enjoyment of the same rights which all other inhabitants of the various countries have would render us careless of our distinctive character, and that we would then be willing to yield to flattery what no force could ever tear from us. Let me appeal to you, friends and brothers! to contradict such an aspersion by your conduct. In this land you enjoy the largest personal liberty; you are equal with other citizens; no one can lay any hinderance in your way on account of your religion, no one can molest you for your belief in one God. It is therefore lamentable that one is compelled to confess, that we do but little to merit the continuance of so much happiness.

Alas! that religion should be so much neglected!—When troubles thickened around us, we did call on our God for enlargement; and now, when we need no longer fear the adversary's sword, we have become careless. This is not well, brethren! it is time that this stain should be wiped from our name. There are signs already visible, that in this country too there is increasing a thirst after the word of the Lord; that persons daily become more alive to the necessity of drinking the waters which lead unto salvation. Let us hope that the signs may not be fallacious, and that daily some one may abjure the sinfulness of his ways, and become a sincere follower of, no less than a believer in the truth of the Decalogue. It is the province of each of you to contribute to this result by acting rightly yourselves, and inducing others to do the same. Every son of Israel is called upon to be a teacher of the truth; every daughter of Jacob should spread the word. But above all it is the bounden duty of parents to see that wholesome religious instruction be liberally and daily bestowed on their offspring; for knowledge like this outweighs far the acquisition of mere worldly sciences.—Let also your visits to the house of God be constant, lay aside your avocations to attend divine worship, bring your children with you, let them see that you are in earnest, and teach them by precept and example: and you will prove to the world that we Jews can hold fast to our law, whilst we join our brothers of other opinions in the discharge of duties as citizens of one common country. If thus you act, then will every returning Pentecost enjoyed in this land of liberty be indeed a day of thankfulness unto the Lord

for the blessings of freedom now vouchsafed, and the possession of the law announced amidst terrific signs from Sinai of old.

May the grace of God the Lord be with us, and may He strengthen our hearts to fear Him and to obey his commandments, from now and for ever. Amen.

Sivan 5th. } 5600.
June 4th. }

DISCOURSE IX.

RELIGIOUS UNION.

O Lord of all flesh! who art of infinite power and wisdom, hear our prayer this day, and plant in our hearts brotherly love and union; remove from our midst causeless hatred and dissension, and grant that all this congregation and all Israel thy people may be a band of brothers, united in faith, united in love, made one by charity. Strengthen the superintendents of this house, let their doings be guided by the spirit of wisdom and conciliation; multiply the worshippers within these walls dedicated to thy service, and frustrate the devices of those who may now or hereafter endeavour to sow dissension where there should reign love, union, and harmony. Do grant, O our Father! that thy holy name may be glorified through our teaching and our humble striving; and pour out thy liberal spirit over us all, that we may

truly know how to worship, how to reverence, how to follow Thee in thy deeds of mercy. May this be thy will. Amen.

Brethren.

In all human labours, be they works of a spiritual or temporal nature, we will speedily discover, that by our own unassisted striving, we are able to accomplish very little indeed. In the smallest effort we make, in the smallest implement we handle we are, although unconscious perhaps, indebted to the united labours of many sentient beings like ourselves acting to accomplish a given purpose.—The bread we eat, is this the product of one individual? No! there was the ploughman to open the soil by the labour of his hardy hands, amidst the sweat of his brow; there was the seedman, who scattered the seed into the furrows which had been drawn over the yielding soil; there was next the reaper, who under the glowing rays of a midday sun cut down the rich blessings of the Lord; next the thrasher, then the winnower, then the miller, and lastly the baker, who all had to unite their efforts to produce this simple bread, our daily food. Now take a view of the tools which these various labourers use! They are the products of the mine, the forest, and the forge. Into the dark bowels of the earth, guided by science and skill, the laborious miner digs his way; unerring tests tell him where is the home of the iron; the ore is brought up to the light of day, whilst yet the future metal is encumbered with uncongenial substances. Another equally skilful, and even more daring, perchance ventures under the bed of the sea and extracts the fossil coal with

which they smelt the iron. Next the swarthy forgemen pile up in the intensely heated furnace the ore and the fuel, and speedily urged by the blast of the mighty bellows the liquefied metal flows in a fiery stream. Now behold the rolling-mill smoothing a bar of one of the hardest products in nature, as if it were flexible as the dough under the hands of the industrious housewife. Again see the smith at his forge, his brawny arm wields high in air the ponderous hammer, and soon the ploughshare is presented to view. The forester also lends his aid; the hundred-armed oak totters, falls; the artisan shapes the plough; and the farmer harnesses to it the laborious ox or the sinewy plough-horse, and rejoicingly he commences his task of tilling the earth. The builder also is needed! By the margin of some rapid brook with busy skill the foundation is laid; stone after stone is carried to the spot, beam after beam is placed in its resting-place; the masons ply their trowels, and the carpenters their tools, and the mill stands finished before you. The millwright's services are now needed; the machinery is duly disposed, the race is properly arranged, and the wheel is fixed in the outer wall; and soon the wagons laden with the produce of the farmer's industry feed the voracity of the mighty engine which so many skilful, busy hands have erected, and the stunning din tells not of danger, of the battle-alarm, of the destruction of human life, but of the production of the most nutritious food provided by Providence for our sustenance. These briefly are some of the labours which many have to undergo, in order to supply the household with a common daily necessary of life; and the smallest morsel even which

enters in your consumption is watered by the sweat of hundreds, labouring to accomplish one particular end.

This one illustration serves for all other employments; and we may say in truth that man, when alone, is absolutely helpless, and more unprovided for than any other animal, from the largest to the smallest, since each of these can obtain its food without the multiplicity of labours which falls to the lot of man. But were the farmer to sit down in despair and say: "How shall I be able to procure iron ore, smelt it, forge it into a ploughshare? how can I cut down the tree alone and make myself a plough? what shall I do? I shall never be able to till my field:" what would any rational man tell him? surely, that he should avail himself of the labour of others, procure the plough which he can find ready made to his hands, although so many preparatory labours were necessary, and just do nothing more than that part of the work which is allotted to him, that is, the mere act of opening the soil, which he is amply able to do by the assistance of the beasts of burden which the Creator has assigned for the service of man. Any one would therefore be reckoned unwise, who would refuse doing any thing, because he could not accomplish every thing; for it is only by every man's doing his share for the general good, that the welfare of every individual is best promoted.

But, brethren, the same holds good not only in the physical, but also in the moral world. Many are the wants of the mind; multifarious are the duties which are demanded of us: and yet they must all be satisfied, if we wish to be happy. Look at the infant

when it first essays its gift of speech; watch its painful efforts at utterance, and behold over it bending the fond mother seconding the trials which her offspring makes to produce articulate sounds: behold her joy when it succeeds in imitating the words "My father! my mother!" and think you not that a great labour has been accomplished? that a trial steadily repeated for weeks, for days, for hours together has at length been crowned by signal success? Assuredly, and you can convince yourselves of this at the return of the father from his toil to his now happier home, when his wife makes the child again repeat the lesson which she has been teaching, and the fond kiss impressed upon the cheek yet unclouded by sin or sorrow tells that he too thinks one task has been happily accomplished!

Months roll on, and the little prattler has received from his mother all the instruction she can give him: she has watched with unremitting care, and instilled in him the seeds of the fear of the Lord; she has taught him to reverence the Holy One, who alone is Israel's God; she has, so to say, opened the mental soil for more extended fruitfulness; and the boy is dismissed from the parental roof to the halls of learning, to receive farther instruction in knowledge and wisdom. Daily new light dawns upon him, hourly some new fact charms his mental vision, and every instant he adds to his stock of knowledge. Does he weigh the toil of the teachers, the care of his instructors? Hardly; he drinks from the fountain which to him seems ever-flowing, and he barely is conscious that it flows wholesomely only through the care of those who are appointed its guardians,

and who instruct him how he is to distinguish between the springs of life and happiness, and those which are charged with death and wo.

The school-years at length are ended, and the youth enters upon the broad road of life, mingling with the crowd, jostled by the competitors who with him run to reach to the same goal. He now gathers knowledge from experience; he has to unlearn much of self-love, much of what inexperienced vanity had taught him to think of himself; he sees things with a different eye, he feels with a different feeling, he hears with a different ear, and the sweets and the bitters of manhood's years force upon him convictions which, if properly viewed and piously dwelt upon, will make his declining years happy, peaceful, and contented.

Were now the mother to give up her endeavours at teaching her child to speak, because she did not succeed at the first trial; were a teacher to dismiss the scholar because he found it difficult to make him comprehend his lesson when he made his first attempt; were the man to become alarmed at the great field of knowledge before him, at the immense amount of learning which he must leave unexplored though he should live ever so long: how could the most eminent of men ever have obtained the smallest part of knowledge? since it is only the constant and persevering labour of the individual, aided by the advice, the tuition, and the care of others, in fact, by a united effort of many persons, scattered over a long space of time, directed to accomplish one common purpose, that the eminence on which he stands has been reached; and it is only by perseverance, union, care

and labour that he can hope to maintain the position he has once attained.

This being so, it may be well to inquire, how we are to do in moral pursuits? what share of excellence can we and others justly demand of ourselves? To enable us to give a satisfactory answer we will consider the following advice, contained in the last paragraph of the second chapter of the Proverbs of the Fathers, a collection of moral aphorisms from those wise men who were the chief teachers of our religion during the latter portion of the second temple and the first century after its destruction, a class of men, who though often reviled by the ignorant and the enemies of our faith, were worthy pillars on which the structure of Israel's religion could rest with safety, trusty shepherds who guarded well the flock committed to their care.—Among other matters Rabbi Tarfone says:

לא עליך המלאכה לגמור ולא אתה בן חורין להבטל ממנה: אבות ב' כא':

"It is not incumbent on thee to finish the work, nor art thou at liberty to divest thyself entirely of its performance."

When a man surveys the wide field of the duties pointed out to him by the law, when he is made conscious that all the precepts of the Bible are alike the word and will of God: he is but too apt to become fainthearted and inquire, "How can I do all that I am told is good? I am poor, and I cannot give charity; I am ignorant, I cannot teach; I am feeble, I cannot attend the house of God, am not able to administer to the wants of the sick and suffering; I

fear there is no salvation for me, since it is said in the Scriptures: 'Cursed be he that fulfilleth not the words of this law to do them.'* Will the Lord have mercy on one who is compelled to be so remiss of positive duties?" To one so conscientious the moralist says: "It is not incumbent on thee to finish the work;" the field of labour is in truth extended, it spreads over all the actions and pursuits of life; but thou art not the only labourer in the service of thy Maker. If it pleased Him not to endow thee with wealth, He will most assuredly not be angry with thee, if thou canst not gratify the wishes of thy heart by bestowing liberal gifts upon the poor that are with thee; if thou are not versed in his holy ways, if from want of opportunity thou hast unfortunately not received an extensive knowledge in the law of thy God, He will not expect of thee to go abroad as a teacher of the word; if thou art enfeebled by age or sickness, and thy feet will not carry thee to the house of prayer, thou wilt not be punished if thou stayest at home and offerest up the breathings of thy heart at thy own fireside, if thou within thy own walls thinkest over the wonders which thy eyes behold, which thy every sense makes thee conscious of; if thou in truth art disabled to administer to those who need thy aid, it is not consonant with Mercy to punish the omission which proceeds not from a wilful neglect. In short, no more than thy powers suffice for will be expected, and no want of means will be regarded as a rebellion in the service of Heaven! His servants are everywhere; from the rising of the

* Deut. xxvii. 26.

sun to his setting, His name is great among the nations; and each and every man has received some capacity by which he can demonstrate his faithfulness. The law contains many minute duties as well as great actions; it enjoins the saving of a human life,* and the dismissal of the dam when the nest of a bird is found;† it commands the restoration of freedom to the bondman in the seventh year‡ and the Jubilee,§ and the fixing of a scroll on our doorposts‖ and the wearing of fringes on the borders of our garments,¶ matters, as we see, of difficult execution and rare occurrence, and others which any child can easily and daily observe. This proves that the law was intended to be the means of salvation; since every one can at all times, whether exalted or low—whether at sea or on land—whether at large or in prison—whether rich or poor, find some precept which he can obey, and consequently do something to gain the favour of his Maker.

But now some one may say: "Since there are so many labourers, for what purpose are my services needed? I am too unimportant, too mean in the scale of society, that my labours should be missed: I will sit contented in slothful idleness; I will not offend, but I will merely let others, greater than myself, do their great acts, whilst I look on and profit by their examples." To this excuse answers Rabbi Tarfone: "Thou art not at liberty to divest thyself entirely of its performance," meaning, that we were

* Levit. xix. 16.
† Deut. xxii. 7.
‡ Exod. xxii. 2, and Deut. xv. 12.
§ Levit. xxv. 10, 41, 54.
‖ Deut. vi. 9, and xi. 20.
¶ Numb. xv. 38, and Deut. xxii. 12.

sent hither not to be idle spectators upon the great theatre of life; action, action, is the word; sloth does not find favour in the eyes of the Master of our labour. We are endowed with hearing, with sight, with taste, with smell, with feeling, that we might enjoy the gifts which bountiful nature presents at every point; but we too have a thinking soul, a reasoning mind, which should set our powers in motion to a higher aim than mere personal enjoyment and slothful indolence. Let us step abroad, cast our eyes over the wants of our fellow-men, and is there no one that can be benefitted by our labours? If we have riches, is there no one who needs our bounty? if we have health, is there no one who lies stretched helpless on a bed of sickness? if we have joy, is there no one who needs consolation? if we have learning, is there no one whom we could enlighten? if we have religious hope, if we are firm in faith, is there no one whom our appeals could reach, who might be warmed by the zeal which burns within us? Say you, "We are humble, unknown beyond the bounds of our houses; poor, afflicted, and ground down by oppression: how can we be useful?" Deceive not yourselves; no matter how humble you are, despite of a thousand sufferings, there must be something which you can accomplish —some trifle which the great have left unfinished. When the master-builder plans the house, does he assign equal tasks to all his men? On the contrary, while the mason with almost miraculous skill builds an arch which may stand for ages, the humble attendant furnishes him with mortar and stone; while the carpenter fashions the beam and fits the joiner's work, the material is brought to him by persons unacquaint-

ed with his art. How long and often would it withdraw the mason and the carpenter from their work, were they to go out each time to fetch the things they need? The attendance of the mere labourers abridges their toil and brings the undertaking to a much speedier conclusion than it could otherwise be. Just so is it with our religious structure. Our Master is the omnipotent universal Architect; the building is the improvement of mankind, for this is the aim of all religion, whether we ourselves or others are the objects of its operation; the labourers are we all, the sons of man; and only by a concerted effort can the building be constructed, so that it may show a beautiful front and a high elevation in the presence of the Creator. There must be none weary, none slothful, none an idle spectator; but whilst the master-minds are busy in executing the great designs for which they were fitted, let the humbler in capacity encourage them during their toil, and endeavour by all means to make their task pleasant, their labours more easy. But O, let no one say, "I cannot work;" for no matter how little one contributes, let that little be done; and many are endowed with a strength of which they themselves are not conscious; many an intellectual Gideon there is who, when spoken to by an inward feeling, by outward circumstances which demand his action, with "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty one of valour," will answer, "O my Lord! wherewith shall I save Israel? behold my family is the poorest in Menasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." (Judg. vi. 12, 15.) Well, is such humility becoming; it were wrong to have an undue confidence in our own powers; modesty is al-

ways the true garb of distinguished merit, as we read in our section of to-day: "And the man Moses was very meek above all the men who were upon the face of the earth."* But, humility nevertheless is no excuse for idleness. When Gideon had been awakened to his own strength, he overcame the enemy who sorely afflicted his people. Just so it is with the mind: when the spirit is once aroused it may achieve wonders! Abraham lived in his father's house, worshipping in humility: he was called forward, and became the light of the world! Moses and David were shepherds: one became the great prophet whom all future ages will ever bless, the other was afterwards the mightiest king of Israel, and what is more, the outpourings of his soul excite now and will excite for ever the sweetest thoughts of devotion, the noblest conceptions in the great Creator's praise. Do you wish for more examples? Go and search in the pages of history, and see who were the true benefactors of their species; they were rarely indeed those born in the purple, very seldom those who inherited immense wealth, but mostly the children of humble parents, they who slowly and laboriously had to climb the ladder which leads upwards. Every thing requires a beginning; the wizard's lamp which calls up houses at the moment they are wanted is no more a fiction, than the idea that great results can ever be looked for if action is not attempted. Only let every one throw into the common stock whatever he is capable of, and as there is a Rewarder of virtue, an overruling Providence, much good will result.—But let

* Numbers xii. 8

no one be presumptuous enough to suppose that his assistance is so greatly needed, that the work must stop, if he is taken, or if he does not lend his assistance.—For the time never yet was, witnessed in Israel, when the vineyard of the Lord was so destitute of labourers, that for the absence of one the work had to cease. If one is removed, a hundred will spring up; if one withdraws, many will press forward to snatch up the tools which the sluggard has thrown down.—Moreover, it is not those who are overweening or who are ostentatious, who either can teach, or whose charity will be acceptable; but it is at the last those, whose wisdom wears the garb of modesty and whose charity is hidden by the love for the welfare of and a regard for the feelings of their fellow-men, who can be truly acceptable. And thus speaks an Israelite* of our own days of his own labours, which have won him a name among the children of his people: "I am still far removed from the thought, as though these attempts (the name he gives his book relative to the duties of Israelites), as though any work from my hand would fill up the gap; for I know too well the entire magnitude of the subject, too well my own limited powers. Upon the whole he must be a fool who believes, that it is given to him, alone, to stand in the breach, the healing of which is in the hands of God. But he too is a fool, nay, more than fool, who, because he cannot accomplish all, attempts nothing whatever, and because he is not rich in every thing, endeavours not to lay the smallest, poorest gift

* Samson Raphael Hirsch, Grand Rabbi of Oldenburg in Germany (now of Frankfort on the Main—May, 5627).

upon the altar of his people.—Only attempts I venture to offer, nothing that is complete;—happy, if here and there one thought does not seem unworthy to one more richly endowed, to follow it up, and there lay his hand on the work where my strength failed me;—happy, if my book should become the inducement to one of the noble sons and daughters of my people to seek refuge from the floods of the times with the only One Firm amidst all the fleeting, with God and his word;—happy, if that which is erroneous and false in my attempts may be recognized as such, that it may not be the means to add to the sum of error and falsehood; but also happy, if they contain any part of truth and purity which He, in whose hands rest the holiest destinies of Israel, may not despise to let it become ever so small a contribution to a brighter building of life of the most holy thing in Israel;—to have carried but one stone to the great structure, to have poured but one drop of oil into the lamp of the sanctuary;—for who would not find too rich a reward in this?"

Thus speaks one who has received a high endowment, who has been raised to preside over the congregations of the Lord in an extensive district in Germany; and it is the right feeling with which we should do our duties whatever they may be, whether the contribution be a book, a deed of charity, or an act of personal piety. It matters not which, every act adds to the common stock of righteousness, to the empire of holiness in Israel. Virtue is a plant which grows best when many watch and labour for its progress. Let all therefore who now hear me resolve to make it their study to promote the spread of

righteousness, to do all which they are able to perform themselves, and to induce others to join them. Let the son follow the father, and if need be let the father even learn from the son; let the wife lead her husband, if he should become neglectful of his duty; let the brother exhort the sister to persevere in the road to grace and piety; in short, let every Israelite be a teacher, an active labourer in the harvest of the Lord. Do you believe the reward will be wanting? No, brethren! our Master is powerful beyond measure, rich beyond compare, bountiful beyond our wants; and no matter how great the number of those who enter his employ, there is happiness in store for all. Come then one, come all, bend your shoulders to the burden, lend your hand to the service, and see whether God will not bless you! Only be firm, be united, let not dissension chill the ardour, check the concord which is so necessary; and remember that, in religion as well as in life, "United we stand, divided we fall!" We have stood for many ages, though little difficulties have frequently disturbed our harmony: it were time now that we should forget them; but let us as loving brothers in one Father's house, unshaken like soldiers prepared for the holy warfare, united as labourers on the holiest structure of Israel, stand shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot, ready for the work, but also with the shield before us and with the brand by our side,—or in other words, let us be ever united by charity, by unison, by virtue, by benevolence, and let us be armed with a knowledge of the word of the Lord,—that we may with the blessing of God be ever prepared to ward off the attacks of those who love not the name of Israel! Only let us

be firm, and of good courage, and we cannot fail; for the Lord is with us, as He ever was with our fathers!

Father! shield us under the shadow of thy wings, and grant us peace, now and for ever. Amen.

Sivan 20th. } 5600.
June 19th. }

DISCOURSE X.

THE SORROWS OF ISRAEL.

O Lord! Thou who judgest in righteousness and mercy, do not visit our iniquities in wrath and indignation; but according to thy loving-kindness deal tenderly and forgivingly with our sins, because we are flesh, frail, and prone to sin. Do regard us with compassion, when thou reviewest our deeds; and shed over the remnant of Jacob the spirit of grace and supplication; and whenever the sword of persecution is raised above our helpless heads, stay Thou in thy mercy the descending blow, and disarm the uplifted hand of our vengeful opponents. Let not the adversary prevail over the weak remainder that has escaped, lest they, who honour not thy name as do thy people Israel, say in their presumption and the pride superinduced by the smiles of success and impunity, that we are forsaken of thy protection, and cast out from thy bounty. O! do speedily open the prisons of the captives, and let those go free, who

have no protector save Thee alone, our Father, who art the Guardian of Israel! and fill with compassion the hearts of those who now oppress thy people, that they may deal beneficently towards all our brethren of the house of Jacob thy servants. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Erst on Moriah's mount the temple stood, when on Zion and in the streets of Jerusalem rolled the mighty masses who had thronged the highways to the sacred city, where dwelt the glory of God. Thousands pressed on thousands to prostrate themselves at the sacred threshold, to behold as it were the more immediate presence of their God. Glad was the shout which responded to the priest's blessing, sweet was the acclaim which told that the Only One was the acknowledged Head of the people that dwelt within thy gates, O Zion!—But hushed is now the tumult, the temple's splendid halls are levelled to the dust; in Jerusalem, on Zion, on Moriah, their rightful possessors are strangers, aliens, oppressed, outcasts, slaves! and a foolish people, a nation that has no wisdom, revels in its invented rites on the spot where once was the glory of Israel. Yes, the very spot, where the temple formerly burst upon the astonished, delighted gaze of the pilgrim, no Israelite can now approach unless at the peril of his life; and in place of the reverence and adoration of the Lord according to the laws of Moses, the muezzin of a newly-invented religion call to prayer, in the name, it is true of the One God, but associated with the belief in a prophet whom He did not send, and out of whose mouth He has not spoken.—Go abroad over the hills and valleys of Palestine,

formerly the land of wheat and barley, the fig, the vine, the pomegranate, the olive and date-palm; where from every eminence refreshing springs bubbled forth; where on every side were fertile valleys, vine-clad summits, populous towns; where on every meadow the cattle grazed in undisturbed security; where at eventide in all its boundaries the shepherd might be seen leading back his thriving flock, in desert, on plain, and mountain, by running brook, or purling spring;—go there where once the beloved nation dwelt under the guidance of their Legislator's code, under the shadow of his rule: and you will wonder over the desolation that meets your view everywhere.—The towns? they are swept from the face of the earth, and of many famous for deeds of bravery, for schools, for nurseries of piety, not a stone is left to mark the spot where once they stood; and the others yet existing have lost their splendour, and squalid wretchedness, and indolent, unlabouring beggary are the lot of their sparse inhabitants. The olive groves in many places are cut down, and though in several parts the fertility and extraordinary products of the land are not entirely gone: still in many others the earth itself seems to have changed its nature, the water-springs are drying up, and the means of fertilizing the soil, which formerly existed, are falling into decay and disuse under the iron sway of the present inheritors of our once blessed patrimony. Where formerly the shepherd fed his flock, and the herdsman stood listlessly near the lowing ox or the grazing cow, the robber now lies in wait behind the bare crag of some overhanging rock, to despoil the unarmed traveller of his envied possessions. And

wherever the few scanty remains of Israel dwell, they are subject to the arbitrary rule, the outrageous exactions, the cruel treatment of some covetous Arab, or a bloodthirsty satrap of the Turkish emperor. There is no festive throng in Palestine; there is no joy at the return of the holy seasons; there is no security for life or limb; but under the dear-bought protection of the stranger the sons of Jacob revisit their own long-loved land; and amidst trembling and fear they worship where their forefathers worshipped; and in the home of the free, the land of the brave, they dwell subject at every hour to be plundered without resistance, to be incarcerated without appeal, to be tortured and slain with scarcely any one willing or able to stay the executioner's hand.

For centuries this has been the fate of our people and of our inheritance; and widespread sorrow has been the lot of one, and almost utter desolation that of the other. How many times did the wheel of sorrow pass over us! how often has been unsheathed the sword to wound and to slay! how many precious ones were sent to an untimely grave, only because they were sons of a hated race! And it mattered little who it was that bore rule, whether the cunning Grecian, the proud Roman polytheist, the fire-worshipping Persian, the light-armed Arab, the warlike Seljuk, or knightly Englishman, or the pilgrim Gaul, —all alike have hated, spurned, and slaughtered myriads of our unoffending brothers! hated them without cause; spurned them because of their belief; and slaughtered them for the sake of crimes of which they were not guilty, and for the shedding of blood which their soul abhorred! It would be a heartrend-

ing task to recount one thousandth part of all the evils which we had to bear in Palestine, no less than elsewhere, since our captivity commenced; but so full is the history of nearly every nation with the cruelties inflicted on us, so stained with innocent blood are the hands of many communities: that they who note down passing events have scarcely thought it worth while to mention the particulars, or to tell us the number of the victims slain to glut the demon of persecution. In short, many have always literally consumed us; and treachery and art, persuasion and force, bribes and the sword have all been employed to diminish the number of those who follow the law of the God of Abraham.

And do you believe that these persecutions are events of long bygone years, to be sought for in musty records of history? Alas! no; there has not been a single age, perhaps not a single year since our dispersion, which has not witnessed atrocities of this nature, which has not told of Israel's degradation and sorrow. Even at this very day, in an age which calls itself enlightened, when learning is achieving wonderful triumphs, when science is laying daily open the hidden things of nature and organization, when one might have hoped that the mind of man would have become less savage and more active to the calls of humanity: we have an exemplification of the same dark deeds which well befitted the iron age, when men incased in steel, and covered with armour of proof, fought for sport with sharpened spears and uplifted swords till one of the combatants lay dead in the lists; and when, fired by the spirit of fanaticism and the love of adventure, tens of thousands forsook their

Northern shores to contend with the dusky sons of the East for the possession of a fancied treasure which they imagined to exist in Palestine. Then indeed, when the priests alone could read and write, when the man of war, with a sword and steed, was more valued than the peaceful farmer or the skilful artisan, it was to be expected that those engaged in perilous warfare, incited by blind zeal, could, horrible though it may be, so far forget the law of love as to chant praises in the midst of streams of blood which defiled the streets of Jerusalem,—whilst thousands of victims of a murderous assault and an indiscriminate slaughter lay yet unburied within the precincts of the city of David. But this state of things has passed away; the lust for and practice of war have in a measure had to yield to the arts of peace; and it was to be hoped that, after the sword had in a few late years drunk the gore of millions, a spirit of calm inquiry would have stopped up the entrance of unreason and falsehood. Unfortunately, however, this has not been the case, and to this very day zealots and fanatics do not pretermit their efforts at extinguishing the lamp of Israel; and not content with attempts at perverting our opinions, they have again within late commenced the system of false accusation, in order to surrender our heads once more to the executioner, that the earth might again drink the life-blood of the best of Jacob's sons. The same fables, the falsity of which has been often proved, the absurdity of which is too apparent to deserve a serious refutation, have been again revived, and it has been said that we need the blood of gentile victims to celebrate our sacred festivals. The Mussulman and the Papist have joined

hands to fasten this foul charge upon our brothers of the East; and many have been dragged to prison, subjected to torture and every species of cruelty, nay, some are said to have expired under the inflictions of their fiendish persecutors. Ay, these victims have cried for help, but none stood forth to aid them! they appealed to their religion which forbids murder, but they spoke to men who feel not pity for the outcasts of Israel; the voice of Europe and of this land, which is lifted up loud enough when other cases of suffering and outrage are presented, has barely been raised; nay, the presumed author of this great wrong is not called on to answer for the evil he has done. O God! has it come to this—is it thy will that we are never to know rest? that we are always to be the mark for malice and wrong? But thy will be done; even as Thou decreest, O our Father! be it our aim to learn submission; only keep alive thy spirit, the love of thy law within us; that thy judgments may tend to purify our souls, to exalt our hearts to Thee, our King and Saviour!

Indeed, brethren, it does seem that the curse denounced against us for our manifold misdeeds is yet active as ever it was, that the infraction of the covenant of God with our forefathers demands to this day the punishment of the rebellious race. For what does Moses say in Leviticus (xxvi. 38)? "And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up." Yes, this has been fulfilled literally, with the sole limitation, that the perishing and the eating up have not been entire, for punishment was threatened, not extermination. The inspired seër stood on the top of Horeb, that cradle of our na-

tional existence; he was permitted to survey virtue and its reward, sin and its direful visitation. To his prophetic view the future lay opened, and he saw how the evil might be averted by a steady adherence to the law of God; but he also beheld the empire of truth invaded by the armies which the inclination to evil is capable of raising against the spread of righteousness on earth. Moses therefore begged and entreated his brother Israelites never to lose sight of their Lord and Redeemer, never to forget that He is ready to reward and able to punish. He warned them that by the observance of the covenant alone could they have peace; but that war and the pestilence, accompanied by their handmaids, famine and sickness, should desolate their heritage for their refusal to obey. And he said in continuation, that our residence among the gentiles should constantly diminish our numbers, and that, so to say, our increase should be eaten up by the land of our enemies. Has the force of this curse ever struck you? if not, reflect for one moment how truly it has been accomplished. Compare our present number with what it might have become, had we been left undisturbed since our second expulsion from Palestine; and had not so many hundreds of thousands been doomed to the sword, had not so many more been mingled up either by force or voluntary apostacy with the nations of the earth: how large would at this day have been the remnant of Israel; every land would have been full of us, every part of the earth would have felt our power! This would have been, had we reflected on our conduct, and returned to the Lord in the lands of our enemies with all our heart, when He would have

opened our bonds and given us enlargement. But we always sought our interest more than the salvation of our God; even in times of danger the spirit of gain swayed our souls, and we endeavoured to fortify ourselves against the attacks of an unfriendly world by the possession of wealth. It appeared as though we wanted to make riches the bulwark against prejudice, and to rely upon the effects to be derived from the gifts of God more than upon God himself. Such folly therefore met its due visitation; our wealth was made the means of our destruction; the cupidity of our enemies became excited, and the apparent wretchedness of the Jews did not conceal from their keen-sighted persecutors the immense hoards of worldly goods they had heaped up; and the destruction of so many homesteads, the expulsion of our people from so many lands only too well evidenced, that our hopes had been built upon a shallow foundation.—And when in other places and other times we mixed too carelessly with the gentiles, when we began perhaps to forget that we were sojourners far from our own land, and the blessed hills of Judæa: again the decree of sorrow went forth, and catholic Spain and her sister Portugal dipped their arms deep, deep into rivers of blood shed by the merciless judges of Judah's fallen daughter. It was long indeed since peace had shed her smile on our path; we were driven from one country to the other, and scarcely any one land was willing to receive into its bosom the loathed descendants of the friends of the Lord; and where we were permitted to rest awhile, the badge of degradation was fixed on our garments, we were penned up in particular streets, denied the privilege of following

the paths of industry best suited to our capacities and tastes, and condemned to resort to traffic alone and menial employments to supply bread for our wives and little ones. Even the right to marry was in many places refused except under cruel restrictions and onerous exactions, and this is still continued in several parts of Europe to this very day.—For those only, who outwardly forswore their hopes in Israel's salvation, there was opened the race to preferment and distinction; and thus, what with the dread of death by the executioner's hands, and honours and ease on the other side, many were lost among the gentiles, though we may also boast of a greater number who embraced death as their deliverer sooner than forego the favour of their God, their portion as adherents to his law, and of others who, though conscious of talents to raise them to renown in higher employments, and not unfrequently invited to forsake their people, still continued to live as Jews in conscious integrity and an obscurity more honourable than the blood-stained triumph of a monarch.

With all this the hand of God was visibly stretched out for our protection, and despite of all the dangers that encompassed us we were not utterly destroyed. At length the bigotry of an iron age began gradually to wear away before the re-discovered saving power of the holy Bible. The world began to inquire, and to doubt the authority that bound every thing to the mandate of a priestly autocrat. By degrees too the bonds of persecution towards our people were more and more loosened; and though yet oppressed, and not permitted to be put on an equality with other

men, we needed no longer to tremble for our personal safety and the security of the honest fruits of our industry. We already thought ourselves beyond the reach of the recurrence of ancient barbarities; we fancied the world too enlightened for men to persecute each other, because they could not agree on speculative matters. Especially were many of us lulled into security when not long since the spirit of innovation swept like a mighty whirlwind over the civilized world, overturning in its violence long-cherished opinions, prostrating deep-rooted custom, scattering to the winds institutions which formerly no man dared to question. We then saw those who had hated us bending in their turn to the blast; we beheld our persecutors flying themselves from the fury of a populace formerly obedient to their wink in the slaughter of unoffending Israelites. We heard liberty and equality proclaimed as the birthright of every son of man; and we saw the people everywhere, roused by this cheering cry, bursting asunder the fetters of slavery, and ranging themselves under the banner which promised to lead them to victory over the prostrate ruins of the mighty fabric, which ages of superstition had endeavoured to rear, like another tower of Babel, the top of which should reach unto heaven. We saw and heard all this; and, swept away too by the popular torrent, we hailed this period as one of Israel's salvation, we felt that we too could share in the triumph of the people's cause—we rejoiced that *we* were free. And truly the change was great and grateful; the contempt attached to the name of Jew nearly vanished, when so many bearing it were invested with power equally with other men, when

bursting forth from the shackles of prejudice, from the limits which the hatred of our name had cast around us, we vindicated our rights as men by a display of excellence in all branches of honourable pursuit and knowledge which before had been interdicted to us.—But wo! as our prosperity increased, so increased our indifference to religion and its observance; as the great mass cast off antiquated opinions, so too did we hasten to prove that the revolution had touched our spirit also. Would to God! that truth did not compel us to acknowledge the apostacy of Israel! would! that a lover of his faith might say, that we did bear becomingly the change in our circumstances. But as ever, "Jeshurun grew fat and kicked;" and as everywhere we mingled upon equal terms with the nations, we became forgetful of our obligations to the God of our deliverance; we ate the food which his law prohibits; we violated the Sabbath of his ordaining; we intermarried with the gentile women, and our daughters wedded those who are not of the stock of Jacob; we refused to circumcise our male children; we reformed, as we called it, our simple worship; we neglected the study of the Scriptures, and in short became lamentably deficient in the fulfilment of our duties.—Yes, we imagined that our freedom was the gift of men, not the bestowal of the Supreme, for which He deserves more energetic exertions to serve and obey Him; we imagined that the age of persecution was over, and that the price of divine protection, the constant vigilance over our conduct, was no longer needed. We fell as we always had fallen; and prosperity, as in former ages, rendered us careless of that which adversity had rendered dear

to us as the light of our eyes. Hence it was that we so eagerly sought to become like other nations, and hence it is that the melancholy spectacle was witnessed of entire families falling off from our religion, not by open apostacy, by an avowed joining of the standard of our opponents,—but by a gradual laying aside of all the distinguishing characteristics of Jewish conduct, till at length of some of these families there is not one remaining to claim affinity with the sons of Israel. Such persons moreover are more injurious than avowed apostates, for these last are shunned as deserters from the fold of the Lord; but the others are like the festering cancer, they are a part of ourselves and destroy the vitality of the body on which they feed. And truly these lukewarm followers of our faith, these Jews by name, where there is no substantial religious conviction or outward conformity, have by their example, and associations, and family connexions drawn in thousands of others, who otherwise might have stood steadfast: until at length we view with complaisance, without the least horror, the public violation of the Sabbath, the eating of the gentile's food, and the intermarriage with strangers to our blood, to such a degree even, that scarcely any regret is expressed if, by such an act as the last mentioned, an entire household be driven from the community of our people, and thrown into the fatal embrace of strangers to our religion.—Nay more, people violate every commandment; some will not seal their offspring with the sign of the covenant, and still claim the right of Israelites as though no wrong were chargeable on their conscience; and they thus acknowledge that, whilst wilfully rebelling against the

law, they believe in its sanctity and divine origin.—And these deeds we imagine will remain unavenged? we defy God, and fancy that his thunders slumber? But "lo He slumbereth not, He sleepeth not, the Guardian of Israel;" He who ever stretched out his hand to draw us safely out of the fowler's snare, or from the floods of mighty waters, will save us, despite of ourselves, from the consequences of our own iniquity, from the foxes among us who wound our vineyards, the vineyards of the Lord, that have tender grapes.* The Lord in his own good time will purify his fold, He will cast out thence those who will not follow the lead of their Shepherd. Yea! though they flourish awhile, their hour of retribution is nigh, nearer than any one may perhaps imagine.—For, believe me, brethren! this is not the first time that indifference and neglect were the besetting sins of our people; already during our existence as an independent nation were there men like those I have endeavoured to sketch to you. An Elijah had to fly for his life, because he had fulfilled the command of the law on those who had misled the people to sin; and when after the times of this devoted prophet the judgment of the Most High had cast the ten tribes from their boundaries: the remaining families of Israel persisted in sin, imagining that the evil would not reach them. They, like the men in our day, were lulled in fatal security, they would not believe that their stronghold, Jerusalem, could become a prey to the devouring flame.—It was then that Jeremiah was called to step forward as the prophet of wo,

* Song of Solomon, ii. 15.

and to denounce upon the sinful generation and their guilty city the evil which was hastening with rapid strides to overwhelm in one common ruin king and people, priest and prophet, city and country, the holy and the profane. And thus we read:

ויהי דבר ה׳ אלי לאמר מה אתה ראה ירמיהו ואמר מקל שקד אני ראה : ויאמר ה׳ אלי היטבת לראות כי שקד אני על דברי לעשתו : ירמיה א׳ יא׳ יב׳ :

"Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, What dost thou see, Jeremiah? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord to me, Thou hast well seen; for I am hastening with my word to fulfil it." Jer. i. 11, 12.

I will merely remark incidentally that the same root in Hebrew signifying almond also makes the verb hasten, thus *Shahkade* and *Shahkahd;* hence the vision representing to the prophet's view the speedy accomplishment of the evil was a rod of an almond tree; and let me farther state that many passages in the prophets must be explained in a similar manner by a reference to a similarity of words in the Hebrew original text which no translation can convey.—Enough, the prophet saw, long before the people thought themselves in danger, the certain approach of the fulfilment of God's word, conveyed to them by former messengers, unless they themselves would avert the evil by a speedy and thorough repentance. The servant of the Lord went forth, reasoned with his brethren, and for many years exhorted them to reflect and to return to the safe haven of the divine protection: yet they refused to listen, their ears were

closed, their eyes averted. But the evil they did not suppose possible did come at length, and famine, and pestilence, and fire, and sword completed the work of desolation, and never was the crown of our head restored since it was hurled to the ground in the days of Zedekiah. This briefly was our fate in former years, when we sinned, reckless of the impending judgment; coming events were actually sketched out fully before the people's eyes; but they would not believe themselves guilty, nor would they imagine the prophecies would become fulfilment.—May it not be, beloved brethren, that evil is now impending over us for our manifold transgressions, for our repeated disregard of the duties demanded by our holy law? Even now persecution has again lighted her consuming torch, its lurid glare has already terrified many of our distant communities, nay some have bled under its visitation: and we fear not; we think the evil too far removed for us to dread its approach. But may not the reports we hear be the muttering of the distant thunder, which ere long may burst over our own heads, in all the fierceness of a destroying storm? may not the distant sorrow be like the heavy atmosphere, which precedes the earthquake that overthrows cities and desolates fertile lands? may not our present safety be like the slumbering of a volcano, whose fires are not quenched though its eruptions have ceased? I fear, I fear, that our security is of a like uncertain tenure; for if even there should be no human persecution possible in lands where the rule of the laws is firmly established, God's power is not shortened, and He has in store exquisite pains of a new and unheard-of nature, perhaps, which may

unawares strike deep into the heart of the obdurate sinner.

Our fathers have sinned, and they are no more; yet we bear the burden of our captivity for the sins they committed. They were unwise, inasmuch as they would not take warning when they were admonished. Shall we imitate their follies? shall we hear the voice that admonishes us without heeding its call? O no, brethren! remove this stumbling-block of unbelief on which so many have been wrecked already; draw nearer to the Rock of salvation, to the Lord your God, whose precepts are in your hands. Seize hold of the hand that is pointing out the road ye should walk, and fear not to suffer for the sake of your Maker, if his service should be surrounded by bodily dangers.—He is the Author of your life, the Arbiter of your fortune: and why then should you refuse to yield the one or relinquish the other, if even these were demanded? But no such sacrifice is desired of you now: you are merely asked to devote a small part of your days, a little bodily suffering, only a small portion of your wealth, because the law so makes it your duty.—Let us, therefore, hope that we will take better counsel, and that we will become more and more allied to the Creator by deeds which well befit Israel, which are consonant with the service of the Most High. If then notwithstanding this obedience misfortune should be our lot, we will have the consolation that we have the favour of our God to assist us in our sorrow; and that, though men frown, He will smile approvingly when we are summoned into his presence to render an account of the deeds

done in the flesh, whilst performing our weary pilgrimage on earth.

Father above! answer our prayer, and look with compassion on thy people in every land where they dwell; prosper the good which is devised in their behalf; but frustrate all the evil designs of those who endeavour to injure thy heritage; and remember that we are thy own peculiar treasure, the children of thy servants, to whom Thou hast promised redemption through thy messenger, the anointed son of David. Amen.

Tamuz 23d. } 5600.
July 24th. }

NOTE.—The above Discourse was written with reference to the persecution of the Jews which commenced in the winter of '40, both at Rhodes and Damascus, under the false pretext, the parent nevertheless of many similar atrocities in the middle ages, of the Jews employing human blood at their festival of the Passover. That such an absurdity should ever have been advanced, not to mention its finding credence with so many whose opportunities of knowing the truth must have been ample, is truly a phenomenon in the history of the follies to which the human mind has at times been known to cling, with a pertinacity and avidity which would have been honouring the cause of virtue and benevolence. And it appears to me that the serious refutation bestowed upon this calumnious charge by so many distinguished men of our people is almost superfluous: were it not that, despite of its absurdity, it has worked immense mischief and caused incalculable suffering to thousands of Israelites at different times. Yet as the world has advanced so far in civilization, and as a knowledge of our laws and ceremonies is now so extensive, it is to be hoped that its late revival, and the consequent persecution, may be the last we shall have to witness.—In another address I had occasion to dwell more at length upon this melancholy occurrence stripped of the above application to religious improvement, and to exhibit some more of the especial features which presented themselves in connexion with it, although

it amounts by no means to any thing like a history of the event; which however I could hardly give in the course of two or three lectures, and which I have no doubt will at some future day be furnished by some one of the gifted sons of our people.

One gratifying circumstance has attended this affliction. Men of all persuasions and of all countries have felt, and so expressed themselves, that a great wrong has been committed against an unoffending body of men; and individuals in all stations have emulated to show their sympathy and to offer relief. Pre-eminent among these stands Mr. Van Buren, the chief magistrate of this republic, who unsolicited by any one instructed the ambassador of the United States at Constantinople and their consul at Alexandria to use their influence in behalf of the prisoners, and to urge the abolition of torture in judicial proceedings in the Ottoman empire. —I know not whether these recommendations have had any effect; but this is of no importance in the present case, as I only refer to the honourable feeling without regard to the consequences. I will merely state that, when writing the above Discourse, these orders had not been given; in fact no public movement whatever had taken place in this country in the matter; though since then the case has been very different.

As these sheets are going through the press the gratifying intelligence has been received, that through the agency of Sir Moses Montefiore and Mr. Crémieux, the Pacha of Egypt has ordered the liberation of all the prisoners confined in Damascus, and given permission to those who had fled to return to their homes. Still the favour of a public trial, which would have demonstrated their innocence, has been refused, and the torture has not yet been abolished, although it was urged by the "representatives of the Jews of all the globe."—In Rhodes also the falsity of the charge has been made apparent, and the authors of the wrong have been punished for their daring violation of the rights of humanity.—Thus have they, who had at first no one to aid them, been snatched from destruction, and thus has divine Goodness raised up friends and advocates to plead the cause of the oppressed.—LAUS DEO!

Heshvan 21st, 5601.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW.

Glory unto the Father who is everlasting, praise and holiness to the Creator of the universe, even in the midst of his servants the house of Israel whom He has chosen to be his people, the messengers of his word, the heralds of his glory, as long as endure the heavens and the earth, which He has created in power and wisdom. Amen.

Brethren!

Like the works of the Lord, so are his word and promises, enduring for ever. Whatever is, exists, just as you see it, for a wise and useful object, although your information, your knowledge of the ways of God, will not permit you to discover the why? and wherefore? Even so is the word revealed from the Supreme Ruler: its essence is wisdom, its purpose the beatitude and salvation of the creatures of his hands. Nothing in all nature is fortuitous, that is to say, nothing is, as we find it, put here by chance, at random, without an ulterior view, without design; for the Wisdom that created, surveyed after creating every thing which exists, and pronounced it "very good:" the design is apparent at every step; the foresight which constructed all is proved by the admirable adaptation of every thing for the object of its existence; every being rejoices in its own sphere

of action; and the pondrous mass of iron which the smith wields to fashion into shape the articles which he elaborates is no less suited to its end, by its texture, hardness, and power of endurance, than is the human body, wonderful as are its form and structure, to the end of its formation. The more knowledge you obtain, the deeper you penetrate by study and reflection into the mysteries and connexion of outward nature, the stronger, the more convincing will these facts force themselves upon your conviction; and at every step in advance you take in the wide book of scientific discovery, you will be standing self-abashed for ever having dared to doubt the wisdom and power of the Creator. And if in the commencement of your inquiry you started with the dreadful idea of disproving the existence of one Ruler and Maker, the first dawn of light which the harmony of all things sends into your soul will make you exclaim with the Psalmist (Psalm lxxvii. 15): "Thou art the God that doest wonders, Thou hast made known thy strength among the nations." The dark clouds of unbelief will vanish; your eyes will be opened to the glorious truth that beams from every star, that shines forth from the bright light of day, that rises upwards from the green meadows, from the flowing brook, from the arid plain; and your ears will greedily drink in the sound that speaks from every hill, from every valley, which is repeated from the sage whose words are wisdom, from the yet speechless babe, from the howling beasts of the desert, and from the feathered minstrels: "There is a God, who made us all!"—It is ignorance alone which can doubt the existence of

a Creator; it is folly alone which in its presumption can deny the overruling of an all-wise, all-powerful, all-merciful Providence. Devotion however is the child of knowledge, and the progress of instruction will fill the spirit with prayerful thoughts, with exulting thanksgiving for the innumerable blessings, for the countless means of enjoyment, which are so liberally scattered over the whole surface of nature by its wise and benignant Author.

But no less than outward nature, is the inspiration of God manifested in the books of Holy Writ an object of admiration; and the whole scheme of divine truths presents to thinking minds causes for study and humble submission; and the more our circle of knowledge is enlarged, the greater will become our attachment to the precepts and doctrines which our Maker has been pleased to bestow on a benighted world. Just as with the Creator himself, nothing but ignorance can have doubts of the existence of the holy Word, or of the wisdom of the institutions which are founded on it. Many there have indeed been who have affected to disbelieve, to find fault, to deny the excellence of the treasure which they either did not understand, or, if understanding, wickedly rejected. But look at their doings—and have these been of the kind to win admiration from their fellow-beings? at their teaching—and can you discover in it aught of that universal applicability which the Bible presents at every page? It were enough to make a philanthropist weep over the folly of man to behold the imbecile presumption, with which he endeavours to estimate the code of our Lord by the small measure of knowledge and light which has been bestowed

on him; especially if he at the same time surveys all the systems which have ever been based upon human invention, from the beginning of the world unto our own days. On all sides jarring inconsistencies will be apparent; and the attempts to file away the roughness of the scriptural scheme in the modern so-called improvements, will exhibit themselves as things to be deprecated by those who humbly wish to serve their Maker and to promote the best interests of their neighbour.

Let the doubter speak of the terrors of a bloody code, such as the Mosaic dispensation; let him declare that he understands not how a law, claiming to be of divine origin, can demand the immolation of criminals for a violation of its details: still let the believer not be deterred from pursuing his humble inquiries into the beauties of the heavenly gift in our possession; but let him look upon the denunciations of punishment in their true light, as evidence of the great weight which the Lord attaches to the observance of his precepts, and that He deemed the transgression of the most vital of them so dangerous to the general welfare, as to ordain that he, who purposely so offends, and scandalizes his neighbour by his open misconduct, should receive condign punishment as a sinner against the public peace and happiness. He ought farther to take into consideration, that it by no means follows, that a punishment is inflicted because it is threatened; but that the law merely declares that a punishment should follow a violation, and the only object of the threat thus made is to deter those, who otherwise might be induced from wilfulness or interested views to become guilty in the eyes of the law, from

fulfilling their sinful intentions. I will merely mention here incidentally, that the punishment of death, according to the best authorities, was rarely witnessed in Palestine, perhaps a centenarian might never have seen one execution from one end of the country to the other; so mild was the sway of the Mosaic precepts, so careful of life, of the sinner's even, was the code which of old governed the Israelitish nation.— To continue: who would blame a father, if he were to announce to his son that he should have no share in his patrimony, were he to bring disgrace upon his family by a criminal course of life? Yet precisely similar is the case with the law: it is the gift of our universal Parent, the Bestower of life and happiness; it is intended as the best safeguard for our temporal and permanent welfare; it is our inheritance, and mankind have been appointed its guardians. Now one of the community, disregarding his obligation to his God and to his fellow-beings, wilfully transgresses, and bids open defiance to the kindly warning which would gladly teach him better things: he becomes in consequence an outcast from the community of the law, and a fester upon the body politic; he is, so to say, disinherited by his own act from his father's household, and his life becomes a forfeit, to deter others from following the evil which has been daringly perpetrated among them! Not, therefore, to revenge, but to infuse wholesome terror into the general mass, for the promotion of the greatest good of the greatest number, or rather for the universal good of all, was the sword handed over to those who are, under the divine sanction of revelation, to administer the rule of state and the dispensation of justice for

the benefit of every individual, be he high or low, exalted or humble. For were it not for the terror of the laws, the state of society would be deplorable in the extreme: each man would endeavour to right himself by his own strength of arm; he would in a measure be compelled to redress his own wrongs; and it requires but a small share of comprehension to be convinced that such proceedings would produce anarchy among the powerful, and suffering and sorrow among the weak and unprotected. If now the Mosaic law is inexorable in its punishment of murder, what is effected thereby? nothing less than the restraining of the man of violence or him of hasty and ungovernable anger from violating the life of his fellows; for if his passion would arm his hand against his brother, he will be perhaps induced to reflect that if he should be convicted of shedding a brother's blood, he would have no mercy to expect from the community who are appointed to decide upon the degree of his criminality.

If the profanation of the Sabbath, committed publicly and in defiance of brotherly admonition, and where there is no case of necessity proved, consigns the offender to the visitation of an ignominious death: is there so much sympathy to be expressed for him who has daringly rebelled against the commandments? No! for the Sabbath was to be the weekly acknowledgment of God's rule on earth and of the debt of gratitude due from the people to their Deliverer; it was to be a time of reunion of all that has life in the presence of the Lord; and everywhere should be rest, calmness, adoration. Now steps forward one from the entire mass, forgetful of God's

power, disregarding his obligation as a son of Israel; he will not rest when his brothers rest; his ox is not to stand quietly in the stall; his ass is to bend his back to the burden; his servants are not to refresh themselves; his son is not to go and hear the word of salvation propounded; his daughter is not to mingle with those who go joyously forward to the house of God; his wife is not to appear among the matrons of her people when all others abstain from toil: what is he but a rebel against the divine Majesty which dwells in Israel, a disturber of the public peace, a destroyer of the social compact, who, if his example were followed, would lead many to sin, by producing a neglect of an institution which is wholesome at the same time to the body, and binding the soul more closely to the Ruler of the universe? Therefore, says the law (Exodus xxxi. 14): "Therefore you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy unto you; every one that profaneth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doth any work thereon, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Not, as we said before, not in vengeance, because the law thirsts for the transgressor's blood, but to remove the evil example of the wicked sinner who, knowing the responsibility he incurs, will still bid defiance to his God, who is the invisible King of his people, and neglect the institution which his brothers in faith justly esteem as too sacred to be disregarded with impunity.

Let us take another example. The foundation of our law is the acknowledgment of the Supreme Being, who manifested himself to our forefathers in Egypt, as we read (Exodus xx. 2): "I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of

Egypt from the house of slavery." Here we are told who it is that demands our obedience; not a being of doubtful power, of questionable goodness, but One of infinite greatness, whose hand is not restrained, whose working is not limited by obstacles, by time, by localities, whose power pervades all space, whose care watches over every creature, whose justice leaves not the humble to remain a prey to the oppressor. This is the essence of our King! this the doing of our God! who is great, good, holy, one, and eternal. Not, therefore, because He is jealous of a rival who does not exist, not, therefore, because He is unwilling to share his glory with a second who can have no being, was idolatry or false worship prohibited; but simply because such fatal error must be destructive to the welfare of the people, as it would gradually lead them away from the truth, and cause the prevalence of systems of darkness and iniquity, where nonentities are adored in place of the everliving God, and superstition and misrule take the place of the wise laws emanating directly from the Supreme Wisdom. What then ought to be the fate of the presumptuous sinner, who publicly throws off the yoke which it is graceful for man to bear, who denies his accountability to his heavenly Father, who openly declares that He has no portion in Israel's God? Is the earth to groan under the weight of such a monster among the community of the righteous? is he to be permitted to utter aloud his blasphemy, and perchance to erect an image of Molech within his field, and sacrifice to it his innocent son, his sinless daughter? The punishment may seem bloody, but it is the only one that is meet for the crime; and whereas the sinner has be-

come a scandal and a hinderance to his brothers: the law demands his removal from among the living, that, since his life has exhibited a bad example, his death may atone for the guilt and be the means of deterring others from following the path of sin which leads to destruction.—But observe, it was not speculative idolatry which was punishable by the sword of justice; for, whilst man sinned only to his Maker, the vengeance was in the hands of the Lord alone; not to man was to be given the judging over another's thoughts and opinions; but it was only when the daring had proceeded to the length of an outward adoration, or of some act which proved to the satisfaction of men that the transgressor had thrown off the allegiance which the whole community owed to their heavenly King, that the civil authorities could step forward to arrest, try, condemn and punish an act which had placed the criminal beyond the pale of the laws, and rendered him unworthy of life.—It were easy to go farther into this inquiry, and to exhibit at greater length the correctness of the punishments in the Mosaic rule of other wrongs besides those enumerated; but for once we have shown enough that the objections of the doubter are by no means formidable before the light of reason; and at some future day it is probable that the inquiry may be pursued in its more minute ramifications.—It is sufficient for our purpose that the punishments were commensurate with the crimes, and that their aim was the purification of the body politic, when it was evident that the sinner himself had been placed beyond the reach of amendment. In addition to this we find a gradation of punishment, and nowhere do

we discover a minor wrong visited by the greater retaliation. Happy, therefore, had it been, if all mankind had submitted themselves to the operation of this code; happy indeed had our nation been, had we always consulted its enactments, and been sincere in obeying them! Then would we have prospered beyond measure, and we should have been an enviable people, with God for our only King, and universal brotherly love the ruling passion of our lives. And it is this alone which is the object of the revelation we have received,—not so much the exaltation of the Creator, who stands in no need of our service, as the welfare of the creature, who needs both the assistance of his fellow-mortal in his search for happiness and the grace of his God to prosper his undertaking.

These views will enable us to understand one of the most sublime passages in Holy Writ, sublime even there where every word almost is fraught with doctrines of life and salvation; which was delivered at the time when the end of our teacher's days was fast approaching, when his priestly brother and prophetic sister had already preceded him unto the land of everlasting life; when he was almost on the point of surrendering his guiding-staff to his trusty successor; when a ministration of forty years, during which he had endeavoured to make known to the people the ways and laws of God, was drawing to a speedy termination. He had been the means of the Lord in effecting wonderful events in behalf of Israel, and by rewards and punishments, both actual and denounced, he had taught his brothers, that the revelation from Sinai could not be transgressed without bringing punishment upon the offender. And now, at the close

almost of his labours, and after he had called to the mind of the people those terrible effects of disobedience of which all his hearers had been witnesses, he spoke as follows:

ועתה ישראל מה ה׳ אלהיך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה׳ אלהיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולאהבה אתו ולעבד את ה׳ אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך : לשמר את מצות ה׳ ואת חקתיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום לטוב לך : דברים י׳ יב׳ יג׳ :

"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes which I command thee this day, that it may be well with thee?" Deut. x. 12, 13.

As we have said, for forty years had Moses been actively employed in teaching the people of Israel, and he was now engaged in summing up, to use a common phrase, all his instruction in a few comprehensive sentences; and our text is the chief part in which he included all that had been said already, and which he had yet to tell. He therefore commences: "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee?" is it something too difficult for human attainment? is it a task for which not sufficient strength has been given? By no means: the labour is easy of fulfilment, if man regards correctly his relation to the Creator. In the first place, the thing required is "to fear the Lord thy God;" and who will not fear Him in whose hand is all the power, and who can do whatever seems to Him best, without

one to gainsay his will, or to oppose his intentions? He is moreover, our God, the Being who has promised us his protection in case we obey Him, and who is able to make us feel the weight of our iniquity if we sin; but which latter alternative we can avoid, if we "walk in his ways." How is this to be done? Ay, by imitating Him in his ways of mercy; to be kind as He is kind; to let our bounty be extended according to our means, just as He provides for all his creatures; to clothe our brother when we see him naked; to give him food when we see him hungry; to give him drink when he is thirsty; to shelter him when he is houseless; to protect him, when he needs our protection; to comfort him when his spirit is troubled; to warn him when he is going astray from the ways of truth; to rejoice in his prosperity, and to sympathize with his afflictions. Farther it is said "and to love Him;" yes, we are to love our Benefactor whose goodness is always extended to us, who ever watches over our welfare, who provides for our wants, whose beneficence supplies us with all we need, from our entrance into life until we are borne off to the grave, whose providence assists us in joy and in sorrow, and who relinquishes us not even then when the spirit has been severed from the body, but bestows on us a life, which is holier, sweeter, happier than the existence in this mortal state, where pain and pleasure constantly chase each other over the varied surface of our being. Yes, we are to love Him, who is holy, pure, wise, good and bountiful beyond what our most excited imagination can reach; we the humble worms are to unite ourselves to the most Exalted by the bonds of love and attachment! Here let us

pause a moment: were a man to utter such a thought, we might justly fear that he presumptuously approached too near to the Deity; but here Holy Writ itself expressly teaches us that we can love our God, that we can make ourselves worthy of his love; that, in short, obedience will unite the creature to the Creator, and that virtuous resolves and virtuous actions will render us children of salvation, humble though our actions be.—And thus continues the text, "and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul:" all that is necessary to effect this is to surrender our judgment to the instruction we have received, not to hesitate at every point, because we see not the reasons which governed infinite Wisdom in his enactments; but they who fear the Lord, who wish to walk in his ways, and who strive to love Him, should follow the road He has marked out for them with a singleness of heart which knows no rebellion, and with a devotedness of soul which gladly yields itself to divine guidance, to the truth as manifested in the records of revelation. If thus we think it will be easy for us to obey the next condition, which is, "to keep the commands of the Lord and his statutes;" for to the humble believer there is nothing unreasonable, nothing superfluous in the law; he will apply the best light given him to elucidate for himself and others the reasons, and scope, and uses of the precepts, and where his reason fails to carry him farther, he will prostrate himself before his God, and obey submissively, knowing that naught but truth and wholesome instruction can proceed from the Source of all wisdom and knowledge; he will adore the Holiness which pervades all, and will never rise in

judgment against Him by whose sufferance he lives, and thinks.—But if we ask, "What is the aim of all this fear, love, and obedience?" the Scriptures answer, "that it may be well with thee:" the Creator needs not our service to complete his happiness, nothing that we can accomplish will augment or diminish his holiness, purity, wisdom, or power; but the acts we do will revert to ourselves, that we may become, though at an infinite degree less than God, holy, pure, and wise, and be armed with faith and a confiding trust in Providence, which attainments will open for us the portals of that happiness which our appointment on earth is capable of enjoying, and make us shine like the stars unto everlasting when our task is ended.

"That it may be well with thee:" yes, the punishments for the infraction of the law also are for the promotion of happiness no less than the rewards and blessings. If God is glorified by the grace which attends the life of the righteous, by the peace which illumines the souls of his servants: He is likewise honoured by the equal measure of justice which reaches the transgressor, by the darkness and cloud which rest upon the spirit of the sinner. So also says David in Psalm xxxvi. 10, where he styles himself the servant of the Lord: "For with Thee is the fountain of life, in thy light shall we see light." It is only when we love, fear, and imitate God, that the fountain of life can be opened to us, and only when we diligently obey the commandments, that we can see the heavenly light which is the light unto everlasting salvation. But on the other hand, as Solomon says in Proverbs xi. 10: "When it goeth well

with the righteous the city rejoiceth; and when the wicked perish there is shouting." This means that the joy which the multitude feel when the true friends of mankind flourish, can be exceeded only by the exulting conviction of an overruling Providence, when the daring sinners at last meet with the judgment they have so long braved, as though the power of Heaven were too limited, or his watchfulness too slothful to reach them, and to put a period to their misdeeds. And when these do fall, when the prosperity on which they so much relied is taken from them, where is their light? The only hope they might have had, the beam of celestial comfort which they might have enjoyed, they have blindly rejected, and they therefore find themselves in the situation of a disobedient son who has been expelled from the mansion of his father for repeated acts of rebellion. —But yet even the sinner is a son of Israel; he is not wholly rejected, although he has transgressed; to him too the Scriptures speak in words of love: "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways and to love Him." No being that ever was created is excluded from the call to conversion, from the hope of salvation. The prize to be contended for is open to all; the only way unto happiness is obedience,—continued obedience if we are on the road of righteousness, and renewed obedience, if we have deviated into the mazes of sin. The light may be obscured, a veil may hide the face of the sanctuary; but the Holy Spirit appeals to us to fear and to love God, and to trust in the righteousness of his commandments, and to acquiesce in the justice of his

chastisements, be they an immediate infliction from Heaven, or through the decision of an earthly tribunal, even if this be an ignominious death for the wrongs with which we have loaded our conscience. And if we do so, then will the light shine upon us also, though the moment be the moment of our death; and the veil will be rent which has excluded from our eyes the face of the holiness of God, into whose presence an entire surrendering of the spirit will lead us, to everlasting joy, to unending happiness.

This is the scheme of the Mosaic Dispensation, this is the doctrine which Heaven himself has taught us of his ways and his goodness; and by following its dictates in the spirit of humility and devotion we all may have the satisfaction to know, that under the guidance of divine grace we may live to work out our own salvation, each one for himself, but not through the means of a mediator, an idea which our religion rejects. No, brethren! the law was given unto us, the people of Israel, to be ours, to be our birthright, all the days of our existence; it is the road to happiness, by following which we are pursuing life, a life of tranquillity of conscience when mortal, a life of unclouded joy when we have entered the mansion of our Father, purified by the pangs of death. Nowhere is it said that any other method exists, nowhere is any other condition required; obedience to God's will is the only demand; but this requirement must be implicitly followed; no deviating to the right or the left, no swerving into by-paths either from fear of loss, or a desire to gain the pleasures of a transient life, or to aggrandize ourselves at the expense of the law, must we permit ourselves, if we wish to become

true servants of the Lord of the universe. Guard therefore your innocence, keep a strict watch over all your doings, and weigh well every deed, whether or not it be in accordance with the measure of the way of godliness pointed out by our text.—And thou youth! who standest at the entrance of life, be not lured away by idle pleasure; turn a deaf ear to the syren sounds that would draw thee into the whirlpool of dissipation; a thousand lights will dazzle thy eye, a thousand charms will obscure thy vision; but only be firm, turn thy gaze unto the holy Word, drink deep of the waters that thence gush to quicken thy flagging spirit; and though the struggle will be severe, yet it will be shorter than thou weenest, and when the tumult of passion is hushed, thou wilt bless the hour that thou vowedst to be a firm adherent to the Lord thy God.—Maiden! whom a flattering world calls beautiful and gay, listen not to those who would undermine in thee the principles instilled by thy parents; heed not those who would rob thee of the priceless jewel, the love of thy holy faith. What are the earthly baubles which deck thy dazzling brow? what are the costly garments which envelope thy lovely form? but perishing trinkets, fading colours, which ere an hour has elapsed may for ever be snatched from thy longing sight. But the ornament which a holy life casts round the lovely virgin, the grace which charity and benevolence spread over the lowly maiden, lowly because walking in humility before God—how unending, how unfading, how imperishable are they! In the highest old age their flowers are yet blooming, and their green is ever fresh even at the border of the grave. Seize, therefore, O daughter of Israel!

the book of life in thy earliest youth, and let its pages guide thee, shield thee, comfort thee, in all thy ways, whether joy spreads her soothing pinions over thee, or sorrow steals with deadening weight over thy troubled soul; and know that female loveliness is heightened, the woman's sweetness increased a thousand-fold by the summit of perfection pointed out to us, the love and fear of God.—And you, who are fathers and mothers in the house of Jacob! would you secure your own and your children's true happiness? then apply yourselves to search for truth, where truth alone is found. Human wisdom, human experience may deceive and mislead you; but guided by God's own holy law you cannot go astray; its precepts lead onward to perfection, its doctrines are the fruit of the tree of life, which are ever in your reach, though the entrance of paradise is barred by the revolving sword of the guarding Cherubim. Yes, the entrance to happiness is closed to the sinner, to him who neglects to obey the precepts of our Father; but to those who seize hold of them they are the tree of life, and the shining blade of the sword, which is destruction to others, becomes to them a true, unerring light to salvation! Be it therefore your endeavour to go before your children with a holy example of righteous deeds; let no occasion pass by without reminding them of the duty they owe to God; let no day elapse that you do not assist them by your precept and example to fly for support to the words of the Bible; and let there never be a moment when they might see that you, their earthly parents, honour not your Father who is in heaven. On the contrary, let it be your first aim to give your children a thorough religious

education above and before all sciences; do every thing to make them acquainted with their duties as Israelites; warn them early of the dangers to their moral peace which they will have to encounter in their earthly pilgrimage; show them by your example that you are in earnest in what you teach, in what you demand of them: in short, teach them to be true sons of Israel, and be yourselves their spiritual light by your own conduct in every stage of life. If this be your course, how lovely will your offspring grow up around you, obedient, docile, pious, beloved of men, favoured by God; and when your strength fails, when old age creeps over your weakened limbs, when the gray hairs encircle your venerable heads, they will tend upon and reverence you, their pious progenitors, to be in their turn blessed as becomes those who acted well their part.—It is thus in your power, O sons and daughters of Israel! to become children of salvation; be it yours to rush forward to this desirable goal, to be there received, purified through fear and love of God and obedience to his will, in the embrace of your everlasting Father, as children of faith and salvation!

Father of all! look down, we beseech Thee, from thy high abode upon us thy children, whom Thou didst call Israel and Jeshurun, and let the light of thy countenance shine unto us, as Thou didst unto our forefathers. O forget us not in our captivity, forsake us not in our dispersion; but let thy spirit and thy light guide us rightly, so that we may discern what is thy will, and follow thy precepts all the days of our life. Bless all thy children wherever they are; and those who languish under the rod of oppression,

do Thou speedily save by thy mighty power; open for them the doors of their gloomy prison, and break the arm of him who has lifted up the sword against those who have done no evil.—Be it also thy will to bless this congregation, to unite them in love and friendship unto each other and all Israel their brethren, to banish from them hatred, malevolence, and envy; and to shed upon thy servant,* whom they have chosen to appeal unto Thee in their behalf, eloquence of speech and a true knowledge of thy ways, so that he may teach well thy flock, and his words sink deep into their hearts; in order that it may be well with them and with their children after them.—And upon all our brethren who dwell in this city, in this land, and in all the world, shower thy abundant goodness, and cause thy words to be sweet unto them, and unto him also whom thy grace has called to speak of thy greatness; and grant that through us thy holy name may be glorified now, and when thy anointed David shall rule in thy name, and when the dead shall be awakened to everlasting life. Amen.

Elul 6th. } 5600.
Sept. 4th. }

* NOTE.—This Discourse was delivered on Sabbath, Elul 7th, at the Synagogue *Benai Yeshurun* at New York, over which the Rev. Samuel M. Isaacs was last year elected minister.—The next following Discourse was delivered in the Synagogue *Sheerith Israel* in the same city on the following Sabbath.

DISCOURSE XII.

THE DUTY OF CONTENTMENT.

UNTO Thee, O God! who art good to all, and whose mercies are over all thy works, do we pray, to be with us in all our doings, to be our support at each and every period of our life, in order that we may not stumble, nor be made ashamed unto everlasting. Be with us in our waking hours, guard us when we sleep, and support us with the mighty hand of thy salvation at our awakening in yonder life of blissfulness, which Thou hast treasured up for those who fear Thee and love thy commandments. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Glorify the Lord your God, ye of the seed of Israel! for his goodness which has been extended to you amidst all the trials to which you have been subjected. From the infancy of your nation up to the present moment, it has been your blessed lot to receive protection in every afflicting event which befel you, and never can it be said that divine assistance was withheld to shield the remnant of the descendants of the Patriarchs. And you have been taught, that in national no less than individual concerns it is no matter what man may do, no matter what the intentions of the wicked may be; for it is at the last the providence of God which watches, controls, and directs for a wise and benevolent purpose all the affairs

of mankind, and out of every evil He may, and does cause good to spring up, even if the eyes of those who witness the event do not live to see the ultimate benefit which is destined thence to arise. Who, therefore, can doubt of the mercy of his God, because he is sorrowing? who will dare to impugn the justice of the Creator, because he beholds those, whom he deems evil and wicked, flourishing for a while like the grass of the field? Says the doubter: "I am told God is just, merciful, and beneficent; and I who am pious, upright, loving God and man, am suffering the pangs of sickness, the pressure of poverty, the loss of friends dear to my heart; there is no justice in this." But is not this in itself sinning, rebelling against the majesty of God? who art thou, worm of the earth, that darest to criticise thy Maker's goodness, to doubt of his justice, to accuse his mercy? Thou sayest that thou art suffering the pangs of sickness, and that thy exertions in the service of God, thy devotion to the good of mankind should insure thee a continuous state of health and capacity to labour. In other words, thou deemest thyself entitled by a prescriptive right to a high reward because of thy virtue; thou renderest thyself acceptable to God and deserving of his blessing; and thou imaginest that thou art injured if any interruption be given to thy labour.—But say, son of the earth, is all thy striving solely for the glory of God? does not some portion of self-aggrandizement mingle itself in thy labours of love? Hast thou never boasted inwardly of thy great powers of mind, of thy great capacity for magnificent schemes? has humility always dwelt in thy soul, when thou didst step forward to fulfil the duties

demanded of thee? has not contempt for thy fellow-beings often obtruded itself at the very time thou wast engaged in serving them? In other words, was not thy virtue often sinful in part, though the outward appearance betokened naught but righteousness? Yet even the most righteous man that ever lived has sinned in this way, and therefore no one can say that he has not incurred the just censure of his Creator; and the afflictions of the body will thus tell thee, O mortal man! that thou art far from perfection, just as thy mortal frame is not exempt from disease and pain; and that, if thou wishest to be accepted from on high, thou must needs purify thy heart, and remove thence all vain desires and presumptuous boasting, and learn that no act will render thee worthy of divine favour, unless it proceed entirely from a pure devotional spirit, from an entire surrendering of thy will to the guidance of God.—And if the want of strength interrupt thee in thy undertaking, reflect, that in this visitation too the finger of Goodness is seen, to recall thee to thyself, and to check the vain-gloriousness of human pride, which supposes itself necessary almost to carry out the benevolent purposes of the Creator, who surely is able to raise up other agents besides thee to effect his will; for His are all the earth and its fulness, and every being that exists has received from Him a task which it becomes him to execute, and it was never intended that a few greatly gifted should monopolize *all* the deeds of mercy to which all mankind should contribute. If therefore thou findest that thy strength fails thee, search deeply into thy own conduct; accuse thyself of wrong where thou discoverest that thou

hast erred, and amend thy ways that thou mayest deserve mercy; who knows? but the Lord may remove the evil from thee, and send healing unto thy diseased limbs, and restore thy strength as aforetimes. Nay, if even thou canst not discover any thing sinful in thy doings (which in itself is almost impossible to suppose): then submit in this case also to the chastisement in meekness, and strive to glorify thy Maker from the midst of pain and anguish, and prove that it is not the mere love of reward which stimulated thy exertions, that not merely the desire to appear great before man nerved thy arm, and roused thy soul; but that it was the love and fear of God which prompted thee to serve Him and to imitate Him in his deeds of mercy. And know that it is by sorrows alone that the truly righteous can be probed, and be exalted above those whose service is not sincere, whose worship is not seated deep in the soul; and that he who is convinced of the righteousness of God will say with David (Psalm cxxxviii. 7): "Though I walk in the midst of trouble Thou wilt revive me; Thou wilt stretch forth thy hand against the wrath of my enemies, and thy right hand will save me."

Or thou sayest, "I suffer the pressure of poverty!" Yes, thou seest worldly prosperity scattered with a liberal hand among thy neighbours; thou art envious of their possessions, thou imaginest thyself entitled, because of thy piety, to an equal, if not to a greater share of success, and thou regardest thyself forgotten by God, because He assigns to thee a daily task to obtain thy bread by the labour of thy hands.—Let us plead with thee. Thou art envious because others are rich! Is this becoming one who calls himself a

servant of God? wilt thou dictate to Him whom He shall bless, to whom He shall be gracious! Thou sayest, "They are wicked, whereas I am righteous." But knowest thou correctly how far their wickedness extends? hast thou the gift to search into the recesses of conscience, and lay open to the light of day what passes in that dark mine of thought, the human soul? Knowest thou the private deeds of charity which the apparently wicked exercise? or admit that they do no deed of mercy (which again is almost impossible, for no man is altogether lost to virtue): still canst thou tell that the hoard of wealth, which thou believest unworthily bestowed, may not be destined to fall into hands which will scatter bounties, and effect charities which thou dreamest not of? Or perhaps mightest thou not become forgetful of thy duties, were wealth to smile upon thee, were thy coffers to be filled with gold? For alas! the example is not rare, where those, who once were apparently pious, whilst the world was unfriendly to them, became suddenly animated by a new spirit when they had obtained riches, and when prosperity flowed in upon them.—Just as was the case and is to this day with Israel as a nation. What a glorious spectacle did we exhibit during the ages of oppression! for when all mankind colleagued together, as it were, by common consent to compel us to forswear our hopes of salvation through the blessed Only One who lives for eternity, when nearly in every place upon the whole face of the earth we were trodden upon, trampled under foot, because we would not bow down to the idols or acknowledge the false worship of the gentiles; when the root of the tree of our faith was

abundantly bathed in blood and its branches ceaselessly watered with our tears: how nobly did we endure all, in love, humility, and submission, because we trusted in the Lord our Saviour, and confided in his power. The louder the storm roared, the more upraised became our prayer; the darker gathered the clouds, the more gloomy sunk the darkness—the brighter shone the light of our faith, the holier beamed the faithfulness with which we clung to our God!—But the times changed. The gentile world had learned to admire Israel's constancy, to understand better the beauty of the system which is the rule of our life. The weight of oppression was lifted in many a land, in others we were declared equal to the other inhabitants; and we regarded the time as a season of the jubilee, we believed that now the bondmen should go free, and no more be heard the task-master's voice. And how did we repay the act of grace which our God had vouchsafed to us? I say, "our God," because is it not He who inspires with mercy the heart of him who feels no pity, and softens the wrath of the tyrant, as Solomon says (Prov. xxi. 1): "The king's heart is in the hands of the Lord as the rivers of water, He turneth it whithersoever He will?"—Say, how did we act when we found that enlargement had been extended to us? Alas! that truth should compel us to answer, We acted ungratefully, unworthily, unwisely! Ungratefully, because instead of obeying more ardently the will of God, we went astray upon the paths of perdition; we neglected the commandments, we forsook the road of life; and we hewed out unto ourselves new cisterns, and filled them not with waters drawn

from the fountain whence flows the stream that refreshes unto salvation, but with the deceitful waters of bitterness which, though sweet to the taste of the thoughtless, are yet in their end death and destruction. And how many are there who have rebelled against the Lord! Do not our eyes behold the melancholy fact that religion lies neglected, that its teachers are unhonoured, and worldly wisdom is more prized than its doctrines, worldly greatness more sought than the riches of the soul to be obtained by the observance of the duties it enjoins?—Unworthily, I said; for what can be more unworthy than disobedience and ingratitude? Were a man to present me with a thing I ardently desire, what would he, what would you all expect from me? but that I should not return evil for good, and that, on the contrary, I should demonstrate my gratefulness by doing every thing to please him. But we, unworthy sons of Israel, did not so regard our obligation to God! our shameful ingratitude caused us to ascribe our safety to the change of the times, to the prevalence of a more enlightened spirit; and consequently we proved that we had not been deserving of the mercy we had received. For in place of duty there is disobedience; in place of religion there is apostacy; in place of union there is dissension; in place of the fear of God there is dread of worldly loss; in place of the love of our Maker there is such a love of public preferment and the amassing of wealth, as well-nigh threatens to drown every feeling of religion which has yet escaped in the confusion and bustle of modern times. But does it not strike you, that this procedure is not consonant with reason, that we are

acting unwisely? Let us again ask, Who gave us enlargement? and is He who gave it not able to dispense also unto us new trials and afflictions? In former ages we have seen how the wicked, who deemed themselves secure against the visitations denounced by the prophets, were overwhelmed when the time of wrath came, and how the destruction of the temple, the slaughter of millions, the dismemberment of Israel's kingdom but too clearly evidenced that the Lord had felt disgust toward the sinning race, and had determined to cast them off because of their transgressions. And now we deem that his arrows are all expended? that age has weakened his power? that no farther will He watch over and recompense our conduct? He, who bestows power on all that has being; in whose hands are the destinies of all his creatures; whom no labour fatigues, whom no length of years weakens! And lo! in the distance the thunder mutters! rumours of afflictions have reached our ears from afar! Israel is again threatened with danger; again the persecutor has dared to accuse us of crimes we thought not of: all, all, because we have sinned. It is possible that they who are the objects of the persecution may not be as guilty themselves as we are, who are here assembled; but nevertheless we may freely say, as was said in the days of Joshua, that "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed the covenant which God commanded them, that they have taken of the accursed thing, have also stolen, and dissembled also, and therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies." We may accordingly aver that for the sins of the general mass, and doubtless to

awaken our attention, has the enemy been permitted to prevail for a while against our brothers in a far-off land,* in order to admonish us to beware of the wrath that is impending, and to flee from the danger which may reach us too, secure though we may believe ourselves, because protected by the arm of laws which regard all men as equals. Yet, are there no other terrors than civil persecutions? is there not disease with its gnawing pain? is there not poverty which falls like a blight upon the labours of our hands? is there not the spirit of melancholy which deadens the faculties of the brightest mind?—But amidst all the evil we have cause to rejoice in this, that one of the effects we have mentioned, that of awakening our attention, has already been happily accomplished. From one end of the civilized world to the other a simultaneous burst of sympathy has arisen from all the sons of Jacob in behalf of their persecuted brethren; all have been taught to feel that every blow struck at the victims of tyranny was a blow struck against the happiness of the entire Jewish people, that every cry uttered by those under torture was a cry which called forth a shudder over every one known by the name of Israel! We have been made conscious that we are brothers, though separated by distance, by climates, and difference of government; that we are one people, although scattered over every land! O! that the other object we have alluded to might also be accomplished, that we all might, being awakened by the sufferings of our brothers to reflect on our conduct, take it to heart and firmly resolve

* Damascus. See Discourse X.

to return unto the fold of the Lord, to again submit ourselves to his guidance, and that "His rod and his staff might comfort us;" that corrected by his paternal chastisement we might forsake the evil of our ways, and receive consolation in the outpouring of good over all Israel, and again lean on his staff of righteousness for support and assistance! For then we should again be sons of Israel in truth and sincerity, and be children of salvation; inasmuch as then we would not have despised the chastisement of the Lord, but been made whole through his instruction and warning.

It was always thus with our people as a nation, and ourselves as individuals. Prosperity spoiled us, but adversity uniformly taught us better things. It was said by the wise men of old: "An humble state is well-becoming unto Israel;" and is it not so with most individual members of mankind? does not the hurry of, and application to, business withdraw us from the service of the God of all? Are we not apt to attend to the details of our worldly concerns, and forget that our soul too has claims upon our time and attention?—Why then, sinful man! wilt thou accuse thy Creator of injustice because wealth is not granted to thee? why wilt thou look with envious eye upon thy neighbour's flocks because they are many, and upon his fields because they are extensive? Behold, thou in thy humble state art not without blessings. Thy daily toil provides thee with food; the industry of thy hands suffices to clothe thee in decent raiment; nightly rest is sweet to thee when thy labour is ended for the day; thy mind is refreshed by the exertions thou hast made; not heavy hangs on thy hands the

time that to the indolent child of wealth seems never ending; and when the holy Sabbath comes in its rounds to again bless the earth, how heartfelt will be thy thankfulness that a day has been assigned thee to enjoy religious repose in the bosom of thy own household; and that, if thou art able to teach, thou canst tell thy brothers of the glory of the Lord, and of his great goodness to his people Israel, and of the wonders He has wrought in their behalf; and if thou art one of the many to whom no such power has been given, that thou canst go and seek instruction in the ways of thy Maker, and learn to do his will even as commanded in the law, which He gave as an inheritance to the congregation of Jacob.—Know also that with the possession of wealth not every pleasure has been obtained, and that a wise Providence has assigned to the poor enjoyments for which the rich often sigh in vain: and thou wilt be ashamed, that thou daredst to question an all-seeing Goodness, for having appointed unto thee a lot of labour, whilst to thy neighbour his wealth is perhaps a burden, and imposes upon him an involuntary state of ease and indolence.

Or thou arraignest the justice of God for having withdrawn from thee those whom thou lovest. Short-sighted doubter! are thy friends immortal? art thou thyself imperishable? Perhaps thy hopes were too strongly placed upon a darling child—perhaps thou dotedst upon a lovely wife—and didst forget in thy exultation that they live through God alone, and it may be that in thy prosperity thou didst not call on Him, and prepare thyself for the change that was impending. And now the doom has come; they, the dear to thy heart, lie dead before thee; soon the earth

is to close over them; they are borne away to the home of all the living, and thou art left alone to feel thy bereavement. But O, accuse not thy God! He is just even in his judgment, there is no evil, no unrighteousness in Him; He has struck the wound, but can He not heal? thou art mourning, but are not thy friends at rest? thou art alone, but are not the departed with their, with thy God? A brief space only will elapse, and thou wilt be removed, and over thee too the clod of the valley will be heaped, and thy memory alone will live after thy form has been laid in the dust; and long ere that, they, whom thou now seest rejoicing in their wickedness, who are surrounded by gladsome groups of healthy children, whose life seems blest by the love of friends, the ties of spouse and kindred, will perhaps have perished as perish the beasts of the field, and their name been left a curse and a byword, after their evil deeds have been exposed to the light of day!—Ay, thou seest not the connexion of things, thou discoverest not the end of events at their commencement; but art thou like unto God? wilt thou measure his foresight by thine? his justice by thy fancies? Be then silent before Him, be humble in his presence; and where thou dost not discover the whole scope of an event, learn to submit with humility, to suffer with resignation. Thou now mournest thy child who departed in innocence; perhaps had he lived thy indulgent folly, thy parental weakness, might have opened for him a path of wickedness, and covered thy head with disgrace; or thy wife, weakened by sickness, might have dragged on a miserable existence, a burden to herself and others: is it not better that she was taken whilst her cup of

life was overflowing with blessings, before yet she had to drink deep out of the phials of affliction which others have to drain?—Mourn then, stricken one, feel the weight of the judgment that befel thee; but turn with repentance unto God, and seek at his footstool the mercy thou needest, and search in his holy Word for the consolation which is to revive thy spirit; and learn to acknowledge that God is just in all his ways, and that his punishments are merciful, as his bounty is undeserved by any acts which thou canst perform.

It were well, beloved brethren, if at the occurrence of any calamity every man were to address to himself considerations like those just presented, in order to hush within himself the tumult of rebellious thoughts which will often arise within us if not timely checked. He who now speaks to you has to acknowledge, that his heart has not always been free from the sin of searching into his Maker's views when sorrow visited his bosom; and he at times thought himself almost forgotten because severe trials were not withheld from him, because the common lot of man reached him too.—But let us reflect, have we not also our blessings, each of us, as well as our griefs? Go and look about you even in the wretched hovels of poverty, and you will be convinced that more good might have been enjoyed by the unfortunate inmates, had they but properly used the blessings placed within their reach. We arraign, therefore, not unfrequently the goodness of Providence, whilst we ourselves are the enemies of our peace; and as was done by Elijah who, when called by Ahab "He who had troubled Israel," answered "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in

that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord" (1 Kings xviii. 18): the sinner should always be rebuked, because he it is who converts the good he has received or might receive into curses and afflictions.—And then, why should we compare our lot with those more blessed than ourselves in order to excite discontent, when we might think ourselves happy in comparison with millions whose fate is by far more deplorable than ours?—Besides this we are all apt to believe that, because others have what we need, they ought to be more content than we; but they perhaps envy us some quality of mind or body for which they would gladly sacrifice the half of that wealth for which we envy them. Believe me one thing, none is altogether happy, none on the other hand entirely forsaken. The Creator regards alike all his works; to his all-seeing eye nothing is concealed; the exalted are within his ken and power, and the lowly He watches, and He shields them on the day of trouble. Were it now, that the Blessed One had to act with human means; were it that his capacities were stinted, because He had bestowed many gifts upon a few; were it that his memory could become weakened by the length of time which has elapsed since the deeds of wickedness which we condemn in the successful sinner were perpetrated; or, since we did those acts which religion demands of us: then indeed might we excuse our littleness of faith, our presumption in accusing Him of a want of mercy, of neglect of justice. But see we not with our own eyes his unending power? do we not behold daily his bounty scattered far and wide, over earth and ocean, over mountain and plain, over city and field? Do we

not constantly witness how the poor are lifted up from the dunghill, how the needy are exalted? Have we never beheld the fall of the presumptuous, the humbling of those who trusted in their wealth, their power, or wisdom? And yet we doubt! and yet we fear to pursue the way of truth, because we see them who forsake it flourish awhile in their wickedness! Therefore are we taught in Scripture (Psalm xxxvii): "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, be not envious against the workers of iniquity. For like the grass they shall soon be cut down, and like the green herb they shall wither. Trust in the Lord and do good, dwell in the land, and feed thyself with truthfulness. And have delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the desires of thy heart." And then continues David:

גול על ה׳ דרכך ובטח עליו והוא יעשה׃

תהלים לו׳ ה׳׃

"Commit unto the Lord thy way, and trust in Him, and He will accomplish it." xxxvii. 5.

Who more than the Sweet Singer of Israel, beloved brethren, suffered from the attacks of the wicked, who was more pursued by undeserved malice? Taken from behind the flock, the oil of anointing was poured upon his head by the prophet Samuel, to institute him, the most worthy of the congregation of God, the future king of Israel. When the armies of his people had been defied by the Philistine giant, he boldly stepped forth to vindicate the national honour. The people acknowledged him as their leader. He was the son-in-law of Saül; the chosen friend of

the disinterested, high-minded Jonathan: and yet he had to flee from the country like one stained with crime, and no shelter could he find in the land which he was destined to rule. He was denounced to his revengeful enemy, and his steps were watched wherever he went. It must have been under these circumstances which tested his sincerity, his confidence in God, that he composed many of his songs of praise, it was under such a state of trial that his soul was filled with the holy spirit, and reproving in himself the weakness of faith, he says, "Commit unto the Lord thy way;" what matters it that I am a fugitive, an outcast; what need I to envy the wicked who are now prosperous and happy; is not God my salvation? has He not promised, and will He not fulfil? Surely, his word will not fail, his promises are not given to deceive; but whatever He says is true, whatever He promises will be fulfilled.—We know how David became afterwards the leader of the people of God; we know how greatly the Israelitish nation prospered under his rule; we are all acquainted with his sincere repentance when he had sinned; all of us have felt the force of his beautiful hymns; his confidence has inspirited our confidence, his filial faith has excited our faith. He became great in a worldly sense; but how much greater was the spiritual blessing which was vouchsafed unto Him! and whilst the world stands, David's songs and David's hopes will be the songs and hopes of Israel. And where are they, whom David in his moments of weakness envied as happier than himself? they are barely remembered, their deeds stand recorded as evidence, how far man can go astray when he forsakes the fear of

God!—Read, I pray you, the whole of the Psalm from which our text was quoted, and you will rise refreshed in faith and resignation, you will feel some of the inspiration which dictated it, even when you are suffering, and you see those exalted whom you call wicked: and you will become sincerely convinced that it ill becomes you, the creatures of God, to sit in judgment upon his government of the world.—You will be impressed, if you judge calmly and reflect with humility, that you have suffered no injustice, that your case has not been forgotten by your Creator, and that the evil you have to endure is a just visitation for your manifold sins, and that your Redeemer lives to send you enlargement whenever in his judgment you deserve a return of his mercy. Be it therefore your constant study to be content with your lot; do your best by labour and industry to improve your condition; and if success does not then follow, be sure that an humble station is best for you, and the sphere assigned to you by Providence to contribute therein your portion to the improvement of the world. But above all, do not grow careless of God's commands, imagine not that the way of evil can become by any excuse the road to preferment. No, let each one be mindful of the injunction "Commit thy way unto the Lord;" do your part as becomes his servants, live under and according to the law, obey strictly its precepts; "trust in Him;" be satisfied with the judgment that is dispensed unto you, be convinced THAT ALL THAT IS IS RIGHT, although you do not readily discover HOW this is. And if you in all your ways know the Lord, remain steadfast amidst trials, faithful in the midst of sickness and pains, upright in poverty, and

humble when fortune smiles: be then sure that God will do according to his promise, send his blessing on the work of your hands, become your Physician in diseases, your Support in poverty, your Stay in the hour of success, and your Comforter in sorrow. Such thoughts, such hopes, such a faith will render your life tranquil, and make you as nearly sinless as mortals can be, and make easy for you the hour of death, when your soul must return to the God who gave it; and thus purified by virtue and faith you will become sons of everlasting life, inheritors of bliss without measure.

O God of Israel! be with us during our pilgrimage in this life of sorrow and trial; let thy countenance shine to us when evil is sent, and subdue our stubborn heart to thy service, so that we may glorify Thee, and proclaim thy goodness to all mankind, unto whom and unto us we pray Thee to send peace and salvation through thy blessed messenger the son of David. Amen.

Elul 12th. } 5600.
Sept. 10th. }

DISCOURSE XIII.

THE WAY OF LIFE.

Our God and God of our fathers! we pray Thee not to enter into judgment with us, for nothing living can be justified before Thee; but according to thy unending mercy do Thou deal beneficently with us,

and condemn us not although we have sinned. For well we know our disobedience and hardness of heart, and that knowing the good we have preferred the evil, and chosen the path of death, although the way of life lay open before us. Yet Thou art ever ready to receive the repentant child! Spare us then, O our Father! and lead us by mild visitation to recognize the sinfulness of our ways, and teach us to deserve thy mercy by a sincere return unto thy service, even as Thou hast commanded us through Moses thy servant. Amen.

BRETHREN!

We find in the portion of the law we have read this day the following:

ראה נתתי לפניך היום את החיים ואת הטוב ואת המות ואת הרע : דברים ל' טו':

"Behold, I lay before thee this day the life and the good, and the death and the evil." Deut. xxx. 15.

Moses, as we all know, had been employed in teaching the people the will of the Lord, and informed them how and when they were to engage in what is called divine service, and how and when they were to abstain from certain acts which are called disobedience to the commands of God. Every opportunity had been seized during a period of forty years to again and again urge upon the children of Israel the necessity of a compliance with whatever had been taught them, and the danger which attended a disregard of the divine behests. They had also been informed,

that the Lord purposed their happiness, and not his own aggrandizement, and that, by choosing them as his people, He merely intended to set them up as living monuments of his power and goodness to the other nations of the earth. And now, when but a few hours of earthly life were left to our great teacher, when but few more words of instruction were to flow from his lips: he addressed the Israelites who knew him to be standing on the threshold of eternity, (since the forty years from the Exodus were just then drawing to a close,) in the above memorable words. Behold! our blessed lawgiver at the head of the people—sinking into the grave with strength undiminished and eye unclouded, not dying because of the weakness of age, or the debility of sickness, but simply because by a just decree he had been doomed for a want of obedience on *one* occasion only not to enter the promised land,—exhorting his hearers to follow the road of the law he had marked out for them, and to hand down this law to their descendants for ever as the code which it behoved them to obey. And if any one of all these were now to have asked, "Why should he obey the precepts of the law?" the prophet says: "Behold I lay before thee this day the life and the good." If you wish to obtain THE life, adopt THE good; that is to say, by obedience only can life everlasting be obtained; by obedience only can life on earth be rendered happy. Look upon the ways of men, upon the passions which agitate, upon the desires which impel them, and you will not find that they lead unto life. Go, brethren! and mix among the crowds that throng the streets, with the inmates of lordly palaces

and the tenants of the abodes of wretchedness, and see whether their unhappiness proceeds from obedience to our law or from a neglect thereof. Look upon the drunkard, he transgresses the law by converting the blessings of God into means of degrading himself to the level of the beast: has he life? Alas no! they even, who love him and are depending in a measure upon the labour of his hands for their support, are themselves among the number of those who must regard his death as a blessing more than an affliction; for he is a burden to himself, a disgrace to his family, and an outcast from the society of the good. And when his end draws near, when his substance is wasted, when his steps are tottering though he is young in years, when his wife and children are dressed in the habiliments of wretchedness, and he looks with dread upon their helpless state: how glad would he be, could he recall the past years of sin, and how willingly would he now, if he were permitted to live his life over again, fulfil the injunction, "Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." (Leviticus xi. 44.) —Yet in the days of his strength and joyousness he did not regard with horror the intoxicating bowl; he poured out the wine, say at the festive board, and watched its beautiful purling with the eye of fondness; he admired its fine colour, praised its age and vintage, and dwelt with rapture upon its delightful flavour. Little did he then dream that the delicious cup would deprive him of wealth, of friends, of reputation, and bring him in poverty and sorrow to an early grave. Say, how came this to pass? Simply because he used that which has been bestowed on man as an occasional indulgence or a strengthening

stimulant, as an every-day drink, and when it was not required to assist the process of nature, regarding only its agreeable qualities, without heeding the dangers that follow its immoderate use. He drank at first perhaps only when in society of friends to any extent; he next craved an equal share when alone in his house; until by degrees his vitiated taste could be satisfied by nothing but habitual drinking, which naturally disqualified him for any rational occupation, and rendered him a spectacle of horror and a by-word, as one who chose death, when life was within his reach.

Or watch the man of deceit, who by a fair outward appearance endeavours to impose upon the credulity of his neighbour: has he life? Certainly not. He imagines perhaps that his superior cunning entitles him to prey upon the ignorant and confiding. He accordingly lays his schemes with a far-reaching view of self-aggrandizement, with a single eye to his own supposed interests. He watches with anxious care, with sleepless nights, every avenue which might lead to detection; now apparently his prosperity stands unmoved; he reaps a golden harvest; he speaks with evident charity of the sufferings of the needy; he is foremost in acts of benevolence; talks with compassion of the foibles and sins of others, as though he were indeed a man of truth and righteousness. Yet he is at heart full of anxiety; he suspects every one that approaches as likely to become the instrument of detection; but all his acts are unavailing; justice, though slow, points at him at last as a traitor to the social compact: and when he stands exposed to the world as a deceitful sinner, when, deprived of his ill-

gotten wealth, he roams over the earth a fugitive and alone, his steps pursued by thousands panting for his punishment, he will bitterly lament the moment that he lost sight of the divine command which says, "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, nor lie to one another." (Lev. xix. 11.)—And yet this man was born innocent as we all were; and many years after his entrance into life he must have remained unstained by the crimes which banish him now from society; and only because he confided more in his own ingenuity, because he had not sufficient faith in the word of God, he was induced to seek prosperity by injuring his brother; and his punishment will therefore teach us, that avarice and fraud, though cloaked by the mantle of outward sanctity, are not conducive to that happiness and contentment which to obtain should be the chief aim of our thoughts and labours, and which can be reached only in the pursuit of righteousness, which is found in the precepts of the religion bestowed by the Lord upon Israel.

Or look upon the man who stands on the pinnacle of glory, the conqueror before whose bloody sword thousands of slain have fallen, the tyrant whose frown strikes terror into all who surround him: has he life? If earthly greatness could confer this boon; if immense wealth could furnish happiness; if flattery of abject slaves, the homage of conquered kingdoms could insure content: then indeed might we say that he had found the treasure we are commanded to seek. But does power render us immortal? does wealth confer satisfaction? do flattery and homage prevent the assault of revenge or stay the hand of the prowling assassin? Where then is THE LIFE of the mightiest

potentate who rises by murder and violence? O no! he has not life, nor content, nor satisfaction. For how can he expect the first, when he has spilt wantonly much innocent blood, and rendered desolate many a happy, peaceful home? He only regarded *himself* in his search for renown; he forgot his mortality, and that he too must appear, to render an account of his deeds done whilst in the flesh, before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One who alone reigns over all; and therefore the unerring and infallible decree of the Judge of all flesh will consign him to that doom which his misdeeds merit.—But even before his final condemnation, he enjoys not content nor satisfaction.—In the people whom he oppresses he can place no confidence, and he is constantly in dread of their rising to expel him from the throne which he disgraces;—the kingdoms which he has conquered will continually strive to throw off the galling yoke which he has imposed on them; and he can only hope to keep both in subjection by an unceasing vigilance and often by increased exactions; for, the course of violence once begun, it is difficult to know where to stop; and thus he is continually a prey to anxious care and terrors; and gladly would he choose a brief space of contentment, no matter what the price might be. Therefore although he is raised high, and despite the extent of his power, he will yet have cause to feel that disobedience to the law is not the way of life, and that the king even cannot disobey with impunity the commandment implied in the words of Holy Writ which says, "That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right or to the left." (Deut.

xvii. 20.) Yet he too—how happy might he have been, had he not lent his ear to advice of the wicked who crouch at the footstool of power! had he not been misled by the glitter of outward splendour which necessarily accompanies his station! Peaceful neighbours would have served him better than the enraged conquered can do; a grateful country would have blessed a wise and virtuous ruler; and an approving conscience and a well-founded faith in the Sovereign of the universe would have rendered his sleep as undisturbed and tranquil as that of the labourer when he has finished his daily toil.—And of one thing be sure, brethren! that human greatness never has blessed with peace any one who had not the heavenly light within him; and it matters not whether it be a Pharaoh standing abashed before the august prophet when confessing his guilt; an Ahab when he met Elijah after slaying for no cause Naboth the Jezreëlite; a Nebuchadnezzar when he was compelled to herd with the beasts of the field that he might be taught humility; a Cæsar when he fell at the foot of Pompey's pillar struck by the hand of his beloved Brutus; a Robespierre when in the moment of desperation he attempted his own life; or a Napoleon dying an exile upon a lonely isle:—all have felt that the chase after glory, unawed by the standard which God has given, is sure sooner or later to produce the fruits of bitterness, and lead to death and destruction.

Nor are riches, and wisdom, and the pursuit of pleasure, and the indulgence in carnal desires, the sources of life. The possession of the first leaves to those, who view them as essentials to happiness, a vast void yet unfilled up, and they die with not the

half of their desire accomplished.—Or speak of worldly wisdom: and can you point out one among the whole crowd of philosophers, from the most remote antiquity to our own days, who either was happy through its possession only, or beloved by the unwise for no other cause than his learning?—Or tell me of pleasures: who did ever exist that had tasted enough of the varied joys which this life affords, or who could say with truth, that the most exquisite pleasure did not always leave a melancholy impression upon the soul? We will not enlarge at present by an investigation of the subject, but will merely demand, whether the happiest of mortals ever found what may with truth be called LIFE in the pursuit of pleasure, from his infancy to the moment of his death, even if no cloud should ever have darkened his horizon, or pain marred his enjoyment?—And with regard to indulgence in carnal desires and the following of the dictates of the passions, it is almost superfluous to assign any reason why they cannot offer life. For let a man but commence a course predicated upon such rules, if rules they may be called, and what will be his end? premature decay, and early death on the one, and an ignominious punishment for laws transgressed and rights trampled on, on the other hand.

In following up these investigations it will become manifest to you that, if we commit ourselves to the allurements of the external world, and have no regard to any guidance save that presented by our own reason, interest, appetite, or passion, our life must pass away very unsatisfactorily to ourselves and profitless to others. The destructive operation of these false guides upon ourselves we have already traced; and

can you name any benefit or service which the vain egotist who is proud of his learning, the sordid seeker after wealth, the glutton and drunkard, and the self-sufficient oppressor, can confer on others by the mere pursuit of their selfish ends? On the contrary, every act of theirs, if it have any effect at all, must be more or less injurious to society, and the annals of the world and the records of crime furnish us with thousands of instances to prove the truth of this assertion. —But turn we now to the man who seeks to shape his course by the law of God, and we shall see an entirely different result springing from his labours. Let us regard him as the father of a family. He is there temperate in the use of things, even those not prohibited by the law; he never exhibits himself before his children in a manner that they must despise their parent; he is the friend not the tyrant of his wife; he is a kind master over his servants, and imposes no unnecessary burdens upon his subordinates, knowing that they are like him servants and children of Omnipotence, who merit, and therefore should receive, kind and generous treatment from those who employ their labour. He instructs his family in the path they should go; he watches their conduct; and because he spends all the time not necessary for his out-door occupations in his own home, at his own peaceful fireside, he has ample opportunity to correct whatever of fault he may discover; and thus he is not only the parent in the flesh of his offspring, but is likewise, conjointly with the mother, the spiritual guide of the children whom God has given him.—Who sees not in a picture like this, where a righteous husband presides over the welfare of the household, a legitimate

consequence of obedience to the commandments? and who can doubt that there is life and happiness, and contentment, where we see regarded the precept, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and speak of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up?" (Deut. vi. 7.)

Or let us visit the man who conducts his business in the fear of the Lord. He is scrupulous to deal fairly with all men; he uses no subterfuges or artful tricks to enhance unduly the price of his wares in the eyes of others; he makes no false representation of any kind so as to deceive with regard to the extent of his means; in competing with his neighbours he will never undervalue their merchandise or throw a slight or doubt upon their fair standing; he engages in no wild speculations by which his own property or that of those confiding in him may be jeopardized; and when any unforeseen misfortune should occur, he will treat all alike who have claims upon him, and prefer honourable poverty to dishonourable wealth gotten by fraud, deception, or concealment. In his pursuit of gain, which in itself is both lawful and praiseworthy, he will place unlimited confidence in the blessing of God, and transact his business so that, in giving to each man what is his due, he will also direct his views to the commands contained in Scripture, and give to the poor according to his means; support, as becomes him, the service of his Maker and the schools of instruction whence virtue, knowledge, and piety are scattered abroad; and when the time of rest arrives he will cease speaking of his worldly affairs and refrain from pursuing his usual avocations, but

resort with those who are of his household to the places where the sons of Israel meet to pray, and where the holy law is proclaimed freely and openly to all who may come.—Such a course is surely one of much peace and enjoyment, and the certain reward will be the obtainment of life,—the life of the soul, and the possession of tranquillity and content; for thus says the text: "A perfect and just weight shalt thou have, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have, that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Deut. xxv. 15.)

Again, place a servant of God in an exalted station; and what will his conduct be? He will look upon himself as a dependent upon a superior Authority, as a representative of a higher Power, to dispense, in a limited degree, because of human weakness, justice and mercy to all who may come under his supervision. He will not rule harshly over those placed under his control, and not impose unnecessary burdens upon the people; but knowing his accountability he will govern with moderation, endeavour to instil true piety and submission to divine rule, and promote peace and good-will among the children of men. Shall I name you instances? Then look upon Abraham; he called himself dust and ashes, and yet he was first that proclaimed aloud the greatness of God; and what was his reward? not alone that the Lord made with him a covenant to be a Protector to him and his seed after him, but the gentiles too acknowledged their indebtedness to the peaceful shepherd, and called him "a prince of God among them," and sought his friendship for themselves and their descendants after them.—Then we had a Joseph who,

raised to the throne from a prison, forgot not the fear of God, when they who had deeply injured him were in his power.—Not to speak of Moses, who was the meekest of men, and to whom no other man ever yet was equal: we may claim David, who, though he occasionally sinned, and thus proved by his example the efficacy of repentance, was nevertheless a devoted adherent to the Lord, and called down upon himself and his house the punishment of sin, rather than that the people over whom he had been called to rule should suffer. And who does not remember David? who that is of Israel's stock but proudly claims a share in the son of Jessé?—And not to extend our inquiries too far, let us call to mind one more Israelite, the virtuous Josiah, who purified the land of idolatry, repented because he was certified of the will of God, and was the means of a renewed spirit of devotion in Palestine. Much was he loved, and his early death was deplored by the poet and seër, the prophet Jeremiah.—And of those who are aliens to our race we may also number many who have done honour to the image of God which they bore. We instance a Grecian Aristides, a Roman Cincinnatus, an Alfred of England, and the good Washington, a man evidently the instrument of Providence to effect a great change in the opinions and customs of men, and who with but a small sacrifice of human life was the means of establishing a powerful state, where freedom and civilization might find a home, and Israelites dwell safely with none to be a hinderance to them or their faith.—It is thus that at the height of human power a regard to the law will insure the happiness of the individual as well as of those connected with him;

and as says the psalm: "Lord! the king will be glad in thy strength, and in thy salvation how greatly will he rejoice!—He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it to him—length of days for ever and ever.—For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Lord he shall not be moved." (Ps. xxi. 2, 5, 8.) And say, who would not sooner be an Abraham, the shepherd-chief and the founder of our now scattered nation, than a Nimrod, the builder of mighty cities, the renowned ruler of remote antiquity?—a Moses rather, whose grave is not known, than a tyrant Pharaoh, for whose corpse a pyramid was raised as a suitable burial-place? or prefer being a Josiah, the restorer of the worship, than a Nebuchadnezzar who overthrew cities and kingdoms? And lastly, to bring the matter closer to our own days, let us ask, who of proper feeling does not believe the fame of Washington, who retired from power when his services were no longer needed, more enviable than the renown of Napoleon, who could not rest till he had usurped the dominion over a people he pretended to honour, and become the terror of many nations, who at length combined and hurled him from a throne erected upon the bodies of slain millions?—Is it not evident, that a ruler governing in humility is a blessing? and that he earns life for himself when his race is run, and can enjoy content and peace whilst yet on earth, because he has obtained the satisfaction of his God, and is secure in the love of those over whom he is placed?

Upon the whole it will be apparent to you, beloved brethren, that the way pointed out by our blessed religion is the road of life and happiness; that the acts

it prohibits are the paths of death and evil!—If now we want to know, "How are we to obtain life?" it necessarily becomes our duty to investigate the holy Scriptures to enable us to obtain the requisite information. And what does Moses say in continuation of our text? "In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, and his statutes and his judgments; that thou mayest live and multiply, and that the Lord thy God will bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it." Whoever therefore wishes to obtain the boon of life, must correct at every stage of his being, every evil propensity he may discover within himself; he must watch his passions, subdue his inclinations, and restrain the advice which interest and self-aggrandizement might whisper into his soul. At every occurrence of life he should ask himself whether the contemplated action is in consonance with the ways of God, whether the deed intended be one of mercy, of righteousness, of benevolence and justice. If called upon by any circumstance whatever to do any thing, be it great or small, he should first consult the Bible, to discover whether or not it is agreeable to the commandments, statutes and judgments of the Lord; or rather, as we are continually and unexpectedly compelled to be active, it is evidently and unavoidably necessary that we be prepared beforehand, and make ourselves constantly more familiar with our duties, both by inquiring from others and a constant study of the word of God for ourselves, so that we may be able to act rightly whenever the time of action may come. If then our peace is threatened by the allurements of the world, we shall in this man-

ner be prepared to stand firmly, unmoved and obedient, amidst the tumult of passion, interest, and ambition. The dazzling glitter of folly may then strive to entice us onward to death; but the steady light of God's truth will point out the way which leads unto salvation. So also says the prophet: "I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day; the life and the death, the blessing and the curse I have set before thee; but do thou choose the life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed."

Let no man therefore plead in extenuation of his sinning, that he is much tempted, that he is engaged in active business pursuits, that the commands of the law are not suited to his taste, that his high station exempts him from obedience,—nothing of this nature will plead his excuse for disobeying the will of the supreme King. For if we are much tempted, we should place before us in lively colours, that momentary gratification will be followed by long years of repentance, sorrow, and perhaps sickness, death, and condemnation of the guilty soul; that habits of evil are gradually acquired from trifling and small beginnings; and that at last every sin will not only make us amenable to the vengeance of Heaven, but will likewise render more difficult for us the ascent to the mountain of the Lord, where is the holy mansion of the righteous who have done his will.—If we are engaged in active business, the greater is our need of divine consolation. So many are the vicissitudes to which we are hourly exposed, so many dangers continually surround us: that we ought to have peace and life within, to resist the blast which at some time to come must assail us from without; and where can

this peace be found except in obedience, and piety, and a reliance on divine assistance, as we have shown? If the words of Scripture are not palatable to us, can this be an excuse for our transgressing? O wo, on the sinful folly, that seeks to place itself above the balm of life! If we have any doubts, if our faith is feeble, let us apply ourselves with double diligence to investigate the precepts of the law; let us prostrate ourselves before the foot of Mercy, and ask for light to dispel our darkness, for grace to combat our unbelief. For when proper devotion has taken possession of our hearts, we will readily embrace the scheme which God has laid before us; we will choose it as the way of life, in which alone we can move onward to happiness.—And if our exalted station would instil pride into our spirit, and mislead us to forget our accountability: then let us call to mind how soon over the mightiest in genius and power the rod of confusion may be stretched out, and how speedily our highest power and brightest wisdom must yield to the conqueror of the most renowned conquerors, and the destroyer of the wisest philosopher, the terrible but sure-coming angel of death.

If thus now we survey the evils attending on sin and the happiness consequent upon obedience, and call to mind that earthly gifts will soon fade and vanish from our grasp, or we be taken from them; and that at last we are in the hands of Him who gave us the law of life: we must be penetrated with devotion and a willing spirit to yield ourselves as subjects to the yoke of the law. To us the choice is given,—we have before us life and the good, death and the evil: there is no power on earth to prevent our choosing wisely.

O! let us take up eagerly the portion of life, and fly to the ranks of the righteous and pious of all ages and all nations, who have executed the will of their Maker according to the best light they had obtained. Let many, let all, resolve to unite themselves to God in the year which is now coming unto us, let us hope with peace, life, and prosperity; let the youth, the man, and him who stands on the brink of the grave, seize hold of the life which is in the law; and when the cornet sounds in the habitations of Israel, let all be awakened to a sense of their dependence on God, and proclaim aloud that they receive Him as their King and Saviour, and seek for life and light in his presence, where there are peace and joy to everlasting!

O God! send unto us, thy people, the good we need; inscribe us in the book of life, of maintenance, and salvation; and cause the spread of righteousness to become abundant among us, and let thy grace be with us, even as we hope in Thee. Amen.

Elul 26th. } 5600.
Sept. 24th. }

DISCOURSE XIV.

SALVATION THROUGH REPENTANCE.

In thy law, O our God! Thou hast written, that even in the lands of our enemies Thou wouldst not cast us away, nor abhor us, to destroy us utterly and to break thy covenant with us. We beseech Thee

now to fulfil thy word, and to keep alive in our hearts the sense of our duty and the remembrance of our covenant with Thee, so that we may be awakened to a knowledge of the sinfulness of our backsliding from thy righteous commands. And do Thou, O omnipotent King! not withhold from us thy protection and goodness; but guard us when enemies assail us in their wrath and pride, and shield the worm of Jacob from the merciless persecutor, who lies in wait for thy heritage. And in thy mercy do Thou forgive our sins unwittingly committed, our wilful transgressions, and our presumptuous iniquity, and wash us clean by thy grace from the pollution of rebellious disobedience. Yes, do Thou purify us, that we may be pure, and stand before Thee renovated with a new heart and a new spirit to serve thee alone, O our God! who art our Father, our Creator, our Shepherd, our Guardian for ever. Amen!

Brethren!

In my last address I attempted briefly to exhibit the beauties of a holy life, the happiness attending on obedience, and the evils consequent upon a dereliction from the path of duty pointed out by the law. It was there shown to you that piety has so many attractions to the rightly thinking, that it is but reasonable to expect that every well-informed person should as a matter of choice become pious.—Yet the fact cannot be denied, that piety is not loved by all, and that religion is more praised than practised; or in other words, that mankind fail to reach happiness, and reap misery, temporary and lasting, as the reward for their actions. It would appear almost, that, were

we to take an account merely of the outward pursuits of mankind, they had no idea whatever of the importance of a religious life, so much are they engaged in pursuits foreign to piety, and in occupations which seem to absorb all the faculties and energies, with which they have been endowed by the God of nature. —If God now were to judge as men judge, if He were to condemn as mortals condemn, who of all the living could hope for mercy? For do we not daily see how sin is heaped upon sin, iniquity upon iniquity, rebellion upon rebellion? We crave the evil that is prohibited, even if we do not practise it; and whenever the least excuse can be discovered for transgressing, we yield to our craving, and openly contemn the divine commandments. This is the course of folly, of forgetfulness of our duties, which so many of us pursue, in which nearly all incur the guilt of sin. Is there one now who has never sinned, in thought, in word, or action? Who can say, that his heart is pure from deceit, his mouth from wicked words, his hands from sinful deeds? Truly, we see the good, but choose the evil; the road of life is clearly pointed out to us in the law, but we walk in the path of death. We surrender ourselves slaves to our unholy desires, and close our ears against the admonition which the words of Scripture constantly address to us. We say, therefore, that if God were to judge us as mortals judge, no one would be justified, no one could hope to see the life everlasting. But He is mindful of our frame, He remembers that we are dust, and will not cut off the sinner utterly, although his deeds merit visitation. On the contrary He gives him opportunities to again merit favour, and to retrieve the errors he has

committed. In other words, the sinner has received a remedy by which he can again obtain divine mercy: this remedy is "repentance." Let us explain: Every act which we do, be it good or bad, deserves a return; and for every deed of our life we shall accordingly be judged by our God and Creator, and receive such a doom as our conduct will have merited. If our good actions, therefore, exceed our sins, we shall receive blessing and happiness as the reward for our past life; but if our sins are more numerous than our virtues, it is evident that we ourselves can expect nothing else than condemnation; for we have voluntarily assumed the responsibility of choosing sin and its natural concomitant, retribution, inasmuch as nothing compelled us to transgress but our own evil inclination, and because we might have lived virtuously, if sin had not led us willing captives into the snares of unbelief and iniquity; and consequently we cannot complain if we have to taste the bitter fruits of our unwise choice.

If now there were no atonement provided for the sons of man, there could evidently be no happiness; since all have more or less sinned, and sinned voluntarily, disregarding wilfully the law of life; and because but few of us, if any, can lay claim to a great amount of virtuous deeds, which would outweigh the load of sin with which their consciences are burdened. It was therefore consonant with divine wisdom to appoint restraints and checks upon our actions, and to ordain seasons which would, from association, make it the duty of every one to institute annually an inquiry into his past conduct, to see if something does not require alteration and improvement; if there is not some trait or quality in his

character which is not in accordance with the religion of the Lord. In this we have thus another cause of thankfulness, in that the law was not only given to point out the way of life, but that it also contains constant reviving springs, which are to fill up the waste of the precious element caused by the avocations, the distractions, the bustle, and the confusion incident to our peregrination through the mazes of our terrestrial existence.—We all know how exciting are the passions and the desires which the Creator has implanted in us for wise purposes, in order to insure the continuance of the human race, and to give us incentives to labour and exertion. But how would it stand with many, if not all of us, were there no inducement or opportunity given to watch the operation of these desires, and to see that they do not lead to vice and immorality, or to arrest their course if we discover that they have led us astray? Would we not hurry on to destruction, slowly perhaps at first, but with an accelerated downward speed, if once we had yielded to the impulse of their sway? How wise therefore is the provision of our law in giving us remedies for both these dangers, by assigning us a season for repentance every year, and by teaching us at the same time that repentance is efficacious and capable of restoring peace between the sinful creature and the justly offended Creator. Ceremonies therefore were instituted, and days of abstinence from labour, one of which is the great solemn day for general humiliation, appointed to awaken the attention of all Israel, and to admonish them, each and collectively, to search into their past conduct, to sift their actions, to accuse themselves of

every wrong they may discover, and to resolve on an amended course of life for the future. The only obstacles to such a procedure are ignorance and stubbornness, and neither is of sufficient weight to excuse a continuance in the path of sin.—Let us examine the first difficulty, ignorance. Says the sinner, "There is nothing wrong in what I do; I follow the bent of what I consider right, and surely my conscience would approve of nothing that is wrong, and I feel no compunctious visiting of the inward monitor; my sleep is sound, my reflections by day are not disturbed by a consciousness of sin: consequently the course I am pursuing cannot be displeasing in the sight of Heaven." It is, brethren! presumption like this which keeps the greater number of those who transgress the law in the road to perdition which they are pursuing, and this simply because they will not see the truth, which is to them accessible no less than to the righteous. But what man, who understands properly the operations of the human mind, will say that a tranquillity of conscience in religious matters is a test of innocence? If we do not inform ourselves of our duties, how can the conscience be awakened to rebuke us if we neglect them? For instance, if a youth at the age of twenty were for the first time to see his father, and not to be informed of the relationship subsisting between him and the person before him: is it possible that he would show him the obedience due to a parent? or would you suppose that there exists a mysterious connexion in nature, which would at once reveal to the one owing duty the person to whom such duty should be paid? Most assuredly the uninformed debtor would preter-

mit the obedience, till he is certified that it is indeed his father who claims the same.—Or suppose a young man who has from his infancy been trained among a band of thieves to steal or commit other violations against the social peace: what do you think are his sensations when he abstracts another's property? Certainly not those of a consciousness of sin, although he may have the fear of detection before him, knowing as he must that no one likes to lose any thing once in his possession; and if such a person is apprehended, he exhibits not unfrequently, what we commonly call, a hardened disposition, because we cannot imagine how it is probable that one can help expressing contrition, when he has violated his neighbour's rights. But the truth is, the moral perception of wrong has never been awakened in the delinquent; it is ignorance which hardens him, and mere punishment, arbitrarily inflicted, will most assuredly fail of producing reformation.—If it were necessary we could adduce a hundred examples, and vary them at pleasure, to prove that the human conscience must be awakened, trained and instructed to make it a fit arbiter of our actions; it is in short a capacity in our soul which, like all other capacities, would lie dormant and useless, if not called into life by proper education.—If therefore we are ignorant of the Bible, if our education has been of that nature which takes no cognizance of our accountability to a higher tribunal than human authority: how is it possible that we should be correct judges of our own conduct? Our conscience, it is true, does not accuse us; but is it not, because it is uninformed, torpid, asleep? Our repose at night is calm and undisturbed; not because

we have done no wrong, but simply because we are not alive to its existence. Our reflections by day are not disturbed by a consciousness of sin, only because we are not informed of the acts that are sinful. If now a man, who proclaims the word of salvation to his brother, were to admonish him to beware of the wrath that is impending, would he be properly answered that the sinner's conscience does not accuse him of wrong? Assuredly not; for he would be compelled to advance that the sinner's ignorance produces this self-satisfaction, even if this be real and not assumed, in order to excuse unto men fallible like himself his misdeeds. He would tell the sinner that he ought to search the word of God, compare every action by that universal standard of righteousness, and look w'th humility into his past conduct to see, whether his conscience has not been burdened with many a deed, for which he has rendered himself accountable. If one were farther to say, that his parents before him had done as he does now, that he has never been taught to look upon the like things as sinful: what can such excuse avail? We will admit, for argument's sake, that his ignorance hitherto might perhaps plead an extenuation for him; but he is no longer ignorant as soon as his attention has been called to his sinfulness. He before knew not that he offended, and his sin was therefore unconscious, without a thought of wilful disobedience; he was not accused by the inward monitor, because the monitor himself was ignorant; but now conscientiousness has been awakened, a new light has been kindled in his breast, and guilt henceforward will attach to every departure from the right

marked out by the Bible. For so we read in Ezekiel (iii. 19): "Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." It thus will appear that perseverance in any wickedness after instruction has been given is not, cannot be availing to save the soul from death.—But let the transgressor open his ears to instruction, let him alarm his conscience when he listens to the admonition that divine grace permits to be addressed to him: and surely he will accuse himself of the wrong he has done, though before then he was not aware of sin, not alive to iniquity; and abhorring the filthiness of his ways he will hasten to the waters of cleanliness, even the word of God and his holy spirit, and endeavour to wash away all the pollution which adheres to him, and make himself a new heart, and become a member of the brotherhood of those who fear the Lord, and have a regard to his name. This change of conduct will have also the farther effect of producing a thirst for more extended instruction in the ways of the Lord and his law; it will incite the regenerated son of man to lay up a treasure, whence he may at all times draw sustenance to invigorate himself, when temptation and opportunity to transgress again present themselves. And as formerly his ignorance made him torpid and unconscious, his new zeal and increased knowledge will render him quick in perceiving any and every remissness in the fulfilment of his duties; and he will no longer boast of that hardy indifference which is nothing else than a living moral death, but will acknowledge that he now fears to offend, that he

now dreads incurring divine wrath; yet that withal he experiences more real tranquillity, more real joy whenever an act of virtue is accomplished. For he now bears within him the conviction that he is within the operation of the moral life which is alone found in the words, and in the obedience to the commands, of the law of our God!

On former occasions we have examined the causes of sin, in so far as they produce the actions which are contrary to the commandments. It is not requisite at present to go again over the whole ground, and we will confine ourselves merely to the obstacle which "stubbornness" lays in the way of a thorough reformation.—It is a notorious fact that habit makes us forget either the good or bad qualities, either physical or moral, of any thing which is placed within our sphere of action or enjoyment. The sensation becomes blunted by constant repetition, till at length we lose sight of the very nature of the thing before us. The delicate ear of the musician will detect errors and jarring discords in the sounds which delight the uninitiated. The latter has enjoyed his false melody so long, that he wishes no better; the former however is at once aware of its blemishes, and he therefore justly condemns it, and wonders how such a mass of inconsistencies can please any human ear. —With regard to taste, even with entire nations, the difference is equally great. The food which shocks many as absolutely disgusting, has been converted by habit into a delicacy to many others.—The same is the case with dress and ornament. Some forms subject themselves to pressure which constant practice alone can render tolerable; and some again require a

large superfluity of garments, which others would, as they think justly, consider a useless burden and injurious to the free and active use of the limbs.—But in the moral world habit has no less an effect on the mind. Whatever we have practised from our infancy will become natural to us, and we will often wonder how it is, that any one can think even of differing from the views we have taken.—Any act, when first we do it, may appear either ridiculous, or superfluous; but if we repeat it, we shall constantly feel less of strangeness in it, and we shall lose at last all sense of its either being a matter of merriment or extravagance. The first transgression accordingly, which we permit ourselves, causes doubtless a severe struggle and self-accusation; but if we do it again and repeat it often, we by degrees will cease feeling the like unpleasant sensations to mar our unnatural enjoyments. When a man has therefore for a length of time been transgressing, he has no longer any pleasure in the pursuit of virtue; because this course would deprive him necessarily of the things which habit has rendered requisite to his perverted taste; or because it will impose on him duties the exercise of which is foreign, and, therefore, unpalatable to him. He for this reason perseveres; not because he is ignorant that the Bible condemns his conduct, but because he is used to sinning.—Now it so happens that most men are either too indolent to institute a rigid self-examination, or are too proud to confess that such a search has resulted in convicting them of guilt. They at all events profess outwardly that they have perceived nothing in their conduct deserving of blame, or which should be altered. They therefore

continue to do as they were wont, and pass their days in life-destroying follies.—But could this pride, or this pride and indolence combined, be once humbled, could the creature but once acknowledge in secret before God and in public before men, that the past acts were habits of sin and iniquity; and could the sinner, thus confessed, but once be brought to break off from unlawful pleasures and seek to find delight in the exercise of religious duties, and could all Israel, could all mankind be induced to embrace the happiness resulting from piety and devotion: how readily would a thorough reformation be effected in every individual, and how rapidly would the empire of sin be banished from the face of the earth!

So many appeals are addressed to us to act after this manner; so much love is expressed by Scripture towards sinful man; so much regret is recorded about the death of the unrighteous: that one would think that every Israelite would gladly be pious, or, if he has offended, endeavour to merit a return of divine favour. But alas! the human heart is too proud, habit is too inveterate, passions are too dominant, for us to humble ourselves and to cast off the evil of our ways; we cling with a bold front to iniquity, and will not listen to the voice of admonition that is addressed to us. But why should we remain stubborn? what is there so lovely in sin? what so absurd in piety, that we should choose the first and reject the other? why should not the dust of the earth stand humbled before the Creator? why should the child not fly for protection to the everlasting Father? —Brethren! there is nothing disgraceful in our publicly confessing that we have acted unlawfully, if we

are sincere in our regret; there is nothing humiliating to acknowledge that we condemn our past conduct, when we feel a conviction of sin. Let us reflect, that the disgrace is not in the change but in the perseverance in doing wrong; that the humiliation now endured before those equally mortal and fallible with ourselves is infinitely less than if our guilty spirit should stand abashed before the unending One, with all its sins unatoned, with all its transgressions unconfessed. But even the mortification of confessing, by a change of conduct, that we thought ourselves hitherto in the wrong, will soon lose all its disagreeable effects, if we but resolutely determine to disregard the sneers and malicious remarks of our associates. Let them say, that we are grown wonderfully pious, that we are becoming saints, that we are no longer pleasant companions: what do we suffer by this? Certainly not any injury which is worth minding; it is merely a little ridicule, perhaps a little pleasant raillery, which we can easily silence, if we candidly state that such jests are unpleasant to us, since we are sincere and serious in the new mode of life we have adopted. And grant, that we should all the remainder of our days be exposed to the jeers of the ungodly, or to the taunts of our friends who may perhaps be inclined to censure our strict observance, and to wonder at the great change that has taken place within us; admit that such taunts may have a disagreeable effect upon a sensitive and irascible mind, in seeing its best acts so misinterpreted and its motive so falsely explained: still is even this more readily borne than the constant self-accusation of the sinner, when his attention has been awakened; and

may not the uncharitable remarks of a selfish world be the requisite temptation which our new-born zeal has to encounter?—Moreover, is not virtue always exposed to the same trials? do not those who never grievously sin meet with similar provocations in their attempts at leading a godly life? What reason then has the sinner to dread these annoyances more than they who have never sinned, if such can be found? —He will say, perhaps, that the latter are so used to obedience that it costs them no efforts to persevere in righteousness, and that they are easily able to disregard the jibes of their friends. But this is not altogether true. No one is so righteous that he is in no danger of falling; no one is so perfect but he feels unpleasantly if he is exposed to detraction and ridicule; it is easily said that one has a hearty contempt for malice and slander; but I fear that but few indeed actually are so far removed above human frailty as to feel in truth the contempt they express.—In short, it is as much the duty of the sinner to look towards the law of God for instruction undeterred by the shame of appearing self-accused before the world, as of the always righteous to be mindful, and to persevere in the exercise of the duties enjoined in the same law. —And if therefore we wish truly to escape condemnation for the sins we have done: we must remove the hardness of disobedience from our soul, expose our shame, if need be, before all the world, and pursue the way of righteousness, just as we are taught in the words of salvation.—Let us consider moreover at whose request, yes request is the word, we are thus to bid defiance to the world! It is not a man who calls us to him, not a mortal whose power is limited,

whose days are brief, but our God, the Everlasting, the Omnipotent, the Omnipresent. It is He who appeals to our better judgment, to our love for his favour, to our fear of his power. He tells us to make ourselves familiar with his precepts, and to throw off our stubbornness; He appeals to us to change our actions if there is evil in them, and to return unto the good which we have forsaken. And we are promised, that such an open profession will meet its reward, in the return of the grace of the Lord which we have lost by our transgression. For thus says the prophet:

דרשו את ה׳ בהמצאו קראהו בהיותו קרוב : יעזב רשע דרכו ואיש און מחשבתיו וישב אל ה׳ וירחמהו ואל אלהינו כי ירבה לסלוח : ישעיה נה׳ ו׳ ז׳ :

"Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found, call ye upon Him, while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isa. lv. 6, 7.

In these few expressive words the whole scope of repentance is clearly laid before us. "Let the wicked forsake his way;" suppose a traveller has strayed from the proper road into a barren trackless desert, where death threatens him at every step he takes: would he be wise to stop where he is, or to continue his perilous journey despite of all dangers which surround him, if a benevolent sage were to appear and offer to lead him to the secure highway in a fertile district, whence he might reach the haven of his destiny in peace and safety? We would assuredly say

that his blood be on his own head, if he disregards the admonition and refuses to be led by his kind conductor. Just the same is the scriptural appeal to the sinner. He has strayed from the road of the law, which is the way to salvation; he has deviated into the howling desert of transgression, which is unproductive of contentment and charged with death and destruction, and every act which he perpetrates when under the dominion of sin is plunging him deeper into the abyss of hopeless degradation. But he is met in this miserable condition by the grace of the Ancient of days, who addresses him in endearing terms of love through the words of Scripture and the advice of the friends of man, the teachers of the word, and the pious associates whom no one is altogether without, to return to the highway of salvation in the law, which, as we have said, is the course of life: what should he do, but seize the favourable opportunity which is offered him, and unite himself to the God from whose service he has strayed? "And," says the prophet, "(let) the unrighteous man (forsake) his thoughts:" yes, if we are anxious to be secure in our renewed pursuit of righteousness, we must not resort to half-measures, to say "we have repented for one day, we are now again in favour with the Lord." This course is but a mockery of Providence; He cannot be satisfied with an attempt to defraud Him by a pretended conversion, by an outward exhibition of an ephemeral penance which is forgotten when the day has closed. But how are we to repent? Even as the prophet says, by first pretermitting our sinful deeds, and then purifying our iniquitous thoughts. We must abhor sin altogether, we must feel that we

are unworthy through transgression in the sight of God, and that through obedience alone, continued during the remainder of our life, can we be accepted. We must cast no longing, lingering look behind, as we are retracing our steps; but speed onward, onward in righteousness, farther, farther from transgression. And as when sinning we hastened by accelerated steps after we had once yielded ourselves to our desires: so will we be strengthened, as we proceed, to advance faster and faster in the pursuit of righteousness; for the forsaking of our wicked thoughts, or in other words the pleasure we at one time felt in transgressing, will impel us to be active in righteousness, and to grow stronger in grace and holiness.—And what will be the result? "Let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy on him." The sinner, when he is aroused to self-condemnation, must not despair of mercy; he must not appeal to the magnitude or number of his misdeeds as a proof that he cannot return, since to him no atonement can be given. No, this is not the doctrine which the Bible teaches; all may be received into favour, all should therefore return. Who is there that has stood in the council of the Lord, and will set a measure to his bounty? who dares to deny to man the hope which God himself has inspired? No! the mercy of God is extended to all who come, his forgiveness is not exhausted, and never will be exhausted. He has created mankind for happiness, not destruction; but it is their business to earn salvation for themselves, at first, by obedience and, if they have sinned, by repentance. Still let no man flatter himself that he will escape condemnation if

he does not repent; for we are told that impenitence will receive the displeasure of our God, who is ever-living and cognizant of all our deeds. We cannot escape, except by embracing the call, the invitation to mercy addressed to us. Let us all therefore seek the Lord while He may be found, before our life draws to a close; let all wait on Him while He is nigh, which is all the days of our existence, but chiefly at the season of forgiveness which He has instituted as a time of atonement for Israel to their latest generation. Let us be convinced, that it is in our power to be numbered among the righteous and the accepted, the elect of God, because they have done his will, and purified their thoughts from evil. Let there be no holding back, no timidity; for what have we to fear, if we act rightly? and what have we not to dread, if we are stubborn and persevering in sin?

O! that all Israel therefore would hasten forward to embrace the tree of life which the Lord has planted for them; how happy a season of atonement would this be, if all were to return in truth to the fold of the great Shepherd! There are those whose hands are defiled by fraud and unjust gain: let them ask for forgiveness of their injured neighbour, make restitution for the wrong they have done, abhor their deceitful way, and then ask of the Lord to pardon their sin, according to his mercy.—There are they who have caused dissension and strife among brothers: let them too beware of the wrath—they have grievously offended; they must strive to heal the breach they have caused; they must confess that they have acted treacherously, and humble themselves to their injured fellow-mortals, before they appeal to

Heaven for pardon and forgiveness.—There are they who have polluted themselves by food which the Scriptures call an abomination: they are now warned that their way is sinful, that it is time to serve the Creator, and not strive unto the end of their days to satisfy a mere carnal craving for useless and sinful enjoyments; and if they have forsaken this evil, then let them too join the crowd of worshippers, and appeal for atonement from the Source of all mercy. There are those who have neglected the covenant of Abraham; their sons bear not the impression of the seal which is to mark them servants of the Most High; they have in this manner spoken by their acts, that they wish not to be of Israel, desire for no portion in the law, the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob; they have braved the Lord, and no punishment has hitherto reached them; but let them too beware; the justice of God sleeps not—He gives them time for repentance, He will not destroy them, while there is hope of amendment; but surely the judgment will at length be executed, and the outraged covenant will see vengeance executed upon the transgressors. Let these also therefore seek the Lord while He may be found, come to his footstool with prayer and humiliation, and bring their offspring as an acceptable offering into the midst of the congregation of the Lord, and rear them, as they themselves were trained, to know that they are of Israel, and their hopes are bound up in Israel's hope.—And they who have violated the Sabbaths of the Lord, do they not discover that they have sinned long enough, that no satisfaction attends a constant toiling, a labour uninterrupted by a spiritual refreshing at the house of God? What

will their unlawful gains avail when the day of trial at length arrives? what will their souls say when they must answer the dread Judge when demanding an account of their doings whilst in this state of probation? Let these also return from their evil; God is near to their prayers, if they will sincerely repent and sin no more; they too will be accepted, if they forsake their sinful way and no longer cling to their thoughts, which only counsel evil, and will debar them from an entrance into the gates of everlasting life.

Brethren! by the favour of God we have been preserved to celebrate the commencement of another year; his mercy has not been withheld from the labour of our hands. As yet it is time to seek righteousness! the portals of mercy are not yet closed! But who will warrant us that another year will be allotted to any one here present? how are we to know who of us will be soon carried to the grave. Should we not, therefore, feel alarmed at the state of uncertainty which is ever extended over human happiness, over human life? were it not time therefore that we all should look to our deeds, pluck thence the evil which threatens our peace, and seek for pardon for our past misconduct? Let no one say, that we have not sinned, individually and collectively; there is sin in the houses, in private recesses, in public assemblies, in the dark of night, in the noon of day! It is therefore the business of all to assist in clearing from briers and thorns the highway of salvation, to purify themselves and to help in cleansing others. Perhaps we may be received in favour; perhaps the evil which we have merited may be converted into blessing, if the Lord sees that we are entire with Him, and sin-

cere in his service. Perhaps in his mercy He may visit the outcast daughter of Zion, and build up her desolate places, and heal up the breaches in her sanctuary which the heathen have trampled down in their triumph, because we had sinned. And how happy would we then dwell! protected by the law of God, governed by his own anointed! No longer would our brothers linger in captivity, and writhe under the lash of the persecutor; and righteousness and truth would guide us all onward to the realms of bliss, to the favour of God.—O! let this holy aim be our desire! let us return to our Father, who speaks to us through his word, who appeals to us through our love of life, through our hope of salvation! Let us, beloved brethren! devote ourselves to his service, proclaim aloud that to Him alone we will cling, that we will henceforward seek in his law alone for instruction, and endeavour to offend no more. Then will we be received as was David received, our sin will be wiped off, and we will not die, but live, and stand regenerated before our Father who is in heaven, in the midst of the assembly of the saints who have done his will.

Bless us, O our God! as Thou didst bless our fathers; and look not to our iniquity, but forgive us, even as Thou hast forgiven the sinning seed of Adam from the beginning until now. Accept our prayer, and cause thy word to be sweet unto us, so that we may all be induced to return from our evil ways, and seek for life in thy presence, by a submission to thy holy will, which Thou hast made known to us through thy servants the prophets. Amen.

Tishry 5th.
October 2d. } 5601.

DISCOURSE XV.

THE COVENANT OF ABRAHAM.

Blessed God, the omnipotent I Am! whose are all existing things, whose happiness is immeasurable, whose goodness is without ending, bless us as ever Thou didst bless the seed of Abraham thy beloved; be with us in the moments of joy, be our stay in the hours of sorrow; watch over us when we are obedient, and reject us not when we forsake thy covenant. Have regard to our sinful nature, remember that we are flesh, and be mindful that we are children of those holy ones of former years, whose devotion and piety Thou promisedst to preserve unto a thousand generations. Give us then thy blessing, grant us thy salvation, and cause that from us too may yet spring generation after generation of true sons of Israel, who will sanctify thy name, even as it is sanctified by thy holy messengers, who declare Thee their God and Creator, and proclaim: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Be this thy will. Amen.

Brethren!

Were life never beset with dangers, were there no critical situations during the course of our existence: then would we require no prudence to guide us correctly, no instruction to tell us how to proceed in our plans. So likewise, were religion nothing but an ad-

mission of certain truths, or an exercise of nothing but pleasant duties: no admonition, no warnings, no rewards, no punishments would be requisite to render us all religious. If this were so, then life on the one hand would pass away in one uniform state of inaction, and religion would fail of improving the soul, or of tending to eradicate the evil propensities inherent in our nature.—But life is one constant succession of dangers and trials; all our energies are perpetually called into action to ward off some unpleasant event or to combat with some pressing difficulty; the mind thus becomes quickened, the inventive faculties are excited; and mankind in consequence are always hastening forward to a state of change and improvement, no matter whether the latter be either fancied or real. If occasionally the result of such exertion must be admitted to be injurious to the great mass: still it is more frequently highly useful and even necessary, as experience has amply proved, to infuse life into the stagnant state of inaction or torpid submission to misrule.—The same is the case with religion; our souls are susceptible of improvement, and our disposition though inclined to sinfulness can be counteracted, if we have a constant watch over ourselves, and endeavour to shape our conduct in accordance with the law of God.

Now let us inquire, What is it which we naturally seek? and what is it which we are naturally inclined to avoid? On the one hand, we seek pleasure, ease, and enjoyment; on the other, we have an aversion to sorrow, labour, and pain. But let us ask, Is it not a moral labour to overcome anger? the desire for any thing unlawful? Only be placed in a situation where

your self-love and authority have been deeply wounded, where the offender is within your reach for reproof or punishment: and the natural impulse would be to give way to resentment, and to let anger take its course of violence and destruction. But religion steps in and tells you to labour hard against your impulse, to put a bridle on your temper, and obtain a conquest over yourselves, even at the expense of your love of self.—Or be placed in a situation where your passions for unlawful enjoyment are strongly incited, where the chances of detection are small, the pleasure great and immediate, the opportunity actually before you, though generally of rare occurrence: your nature is drawn to sin; but the law of God appeals to you to beware, to hesitate, to reflect and to renounce your wishes, in obedience to a higher Will, to a superior Authority. It is doubtless true that the resistance of human nature in both instances mentioned will be very great, the love of ease and enjoyment will strongly appeal for gratification; but the wisely thinking will nevertheless readily distinguish that the labour of self-conquest and the pain of suppressing the passions are the only means to prevent them from feeling hereafter the fruits of indulgence—self-abasement, shame, and degradation.

If now any one will not obey the law of God, because it contains precepts the execution of which is painful, laborious, and unpleasant; if one avers that the God of love could not have demanded bodily afflictions as a part of his service: we will tell him, that he does not understand the *why* of these institutions; they are intended to teach us to subdue our natures, to overcome our love of ease and pleasure, to inure

ourselves to the sorrows and cares with which our life is beset from its very commencement, in order that we may become wiser and better, and more fitted for the kingdom of heaven, which is to be our home unto everlasting, our residence unto the utmost length of days.—All that is wanting to insure a proper understanding of these ordinances is a deep-seated faith, or a conviction of the goodness and truth of the Lord in all He does, in all He says; that He will ordain nothing which is not wise; that He will demand nothing at our hands which is not for our own improvement. Were it now, brethren! that our own wisdom could be so extended as to understand the operation of outward nature and the workings of our own mind; could we precisely know what is beneficial, what is hurtful, how far one thing may be safely used, and how far we could without danger proceed in our intended plans: then indeed might we be permitted to dive into the recesses of religious truths, and ask, for every precept in the law, "Why is this so?" But how does the case stand? The knowledge we have of our own selves is very limited; the surface only of things is laid open to our view; we taste, we eat, we drink, we revel, without knowing whether there is life or death lurking amidst our joy; we move onward unconscious whether the next step will bring us to our end. And *we* will ask of God, why *He* so ordained it in his law? we, the short of days, the limited in knowledge, will know the reason for every precept before we act? How presumptuous, how foolish is such a thought! It may rather be demanded of us, that we have confidence, the assurance I ought to say, that every precept is given for a wise purpose,

for a beneficent end; and we should obey it with feelings of thankfulness that the Omnipotent was pleased to point out to us the way we should go, in order to obtain his approval. If now the execution of any one commandment should involve the sacrifice of personal ease, and the endurance of some little bodily pain: it will be nothing more in effect than that we have an opportunity to prove, that our love of God is something more than a love of ease and self-indulgence; that our religious hope is something holier than a mere mercenary feeling; and that we can love the Lord and worship Him, even if our natural sensations have to be first subdued before we can display this love and this worship.

Besides all this we may maintain, that though the Bible asks of us the performance of duties which involve bodily afflictions, these are in no case whatever of any lasting or oppressive duration. For the Lord in giving us his law wisely apportioned our duties to our capacities; and it is therefore in our power to obey whenever the opportunity offers, unless we are restrained by circumstances over which we have no control, which present then a case of necessity, or, what is the same, an excusable neglect of our positive duties. But in every other instance the unpleasantness of an obligation is no reason why it should not be acted on; for we should consider that it is a trial of our faith, a proving of our nature, to show whether our confidence in God is sufficiently firm and well established to enable us to sacrifice our ease and inclination in obedience to his will.—If now we obey, we have slain SIN which is inherent in us; we have conquered ourselves; and we have proved that

we are indeed servants of the Most High. But if we fail, we have yielded ourselves slaves to sin; we have been remiss in the battle for righteousness, and have proved that we are recreants in the service of Heaven. On the one hand the spirit has prevailed in the contest with the flesh, and we have become children of light, inheritors of salvation; for we have withstood, even as is the will of our Master who is in heaven. On the other hand, however, the flesh has prevailed, the spirit is slain, the world is triumphant; and we have earned for our ourselves immortal disgrace, and the lasting displeasure of the upright Arbiter who will judge every one according to his deeds.

What is now to be expected from us? How should Israelites act?—Even as Abraham did, in faith, in singleness of heart, in submission to the divine will. Before to-day the character of this Patriarch has been presented to you as the propagator of religious knowledge, as the harbinger of glorious truths to a benighted world. Let us look upon him now in the light of the obedient servant, the uncomplaining, confiding follower of the Lord of hosts.—We read in our lesson of this day as follows:

ויהי אברם בן תשעים שנה ותשע שנים וירא ה׳ אל אברם ויאמר אליו אני אל שדי התהלך לפני והיה תמים : ואתנה בריתי ביני ובינך וארבה אותך במאד מאד ; בראשית יז׳ א׳ ב׳ :

"And when Abram was ninety and nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the God Almighty, walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will give my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly." Genesis xvii. 1, 2.

How greatly had Abram been blessed in all worldly things except children; and in later years this blessing also had in a measure been added to his almost overflowing cup of happiness.—Did he covet wealth? he was possessed of every thing which constituted riches in those days.—Did he sigh for power? this too he had, for he was foremost among the chiefs of his time. Did he desire a good name? this also he enjoyed in an eminent degree. Moreover he was pious, and had been permitted to make the truth that was his known to others, that they also might seek shelter under the wings of Omnipotence, and forsake the worship of false deities.—He was at this time ninety-nine years old; more than half of his life had already passed away: when he was told, that as yet his piety had not been perfect, and that with all his devotion, with all his public teaching, with all the trials he had to encounter, there was yet something more to be done, some farther requisite to holiness was yet expected from him. Hitherto the trials had been outward; that is to say, whatever had happened to our ancestor was the work of others, which he had to encounter, humanly speaking, whether he would or not; he was placed in circumstances which permitted him no other course of conduct. But now the trial was to be with himself; he was voluntarily to assume the terms of the covenant which the Lord was about to make with him. Abram fell prostrate before the awful Appearance, and the word was vouchsafed to him, and he was told how he should walk before God and be perfect. "This is my covenant, which you shall observe between me and between you, and between thy seed after thee, circumcise

unto yourselves every male." (Ibid. 10.) Understand well, brethren! Abraham was on the verge of a hundred years, he had all along thought that his course was pleasing to God, and up to this moment he had never yet been informed that circumcision was either a duty or praiseworthy. If Abraham now had been of those whose faith is weak, he might have argued: "Why am I at this late period commanded to do an act which, if it be a duty, ought to have been revealed to me years ago? Why should God single out a matter which is painful and unpleasant, and make that a sign of his covenant? Could He not have told me of my duty much earlier? or could He not give me a sign which is of easier attainment and more consonant with my feelings?" But he, the first of the children of the East, did not so argue, did not so set up his judgment above the wisdom of the Lord. He was informed that he was not yet entire with God, that it was demanded of him that he should walk before the Lord, and that he should assume the sign of the covenant, even the circumcision of the flesh: and he obeyed; he was elated with the thought that he at length had an opportunity to prove that bodily inconvenience did not stand as a barrier to his devotion, that he could mortify the flesh, if religion so required it. How holy must have been that faith, how entire that heart which animated the Patriarch! He voluntarily shed his blood, of his own free will he assumed the covenant, and handed it down to his posterity. And additional blessings were poured out upon him; the Lord promised that unto all the future descendants of Abraham He would be God, that is to say, that never, never, should the knowledge of the pure One

depart from Abraham's seed, and that in all ages the God of all would dwell in the midst of the descendants of his devoted servant, if they keep the covenant.—And thou, O blessed covenant, hast never yet departed from the midst of us! In every age, in every land, our brothers have brought their children as an acceptable offering to the Most High, not by immolating them upon the altar of unbelief, but by rendering them perfect in the manner the law demands. And fathers have hastened to impress thee on their sons, and mothers have rejoiced that their portion was so happy; and the people with one accord have professed aloud, that in thee they acknowledge, that through thee they are convinced that the Lord is God alone, that his word will ever endure, and that Israel is the people selected to be his servants, chosen to be the messengers of his glory.

Hitherto Sarah had been childless: yet the effects of Abraham's faith were not alone confined to spiritual grace, but were extended likewise to increase his temporal satisfaction. A year had just elapsed from the time of the announcement, when Sarah, to complete her happiness, saw the fulfilment of all her hopes. Her long-tried confidence, the anxious waiting for the verification of the Lord's promises, had now witnessed an entire accomplishment; and she could no longer doubt that the fulfilment of the other promises would not fail, but that from her seed all the world should derive blessing, and that her descendants should always be a people sacred to the service of the One Eternal.—Therefore at the age of eight days was the child of promise circumcised, as the Lord had commanded; and thus was the

parent of Israel the first of Abraham's sons who received the impress of the covenant at his entrance into life.

We, his descendants, stand now on earth, the inheritors of the covenant, the children of salvation under the law. Centuries have rolled on, ages have followed on ages, and yet this covenant and this law have stood our protecting angels from amalgamation and perishing among the gentiles. And this covenant is a constant test, a trial of faith, whether we are willing to walk before the Lord, whether as parents we are sufficiently imbued with the spirit of religion to submit ourselves to divine guidance, and to inflict upon our sons a few brief hours of pain in obedience to the law, for which temporary suffering they are to be admitted into the community of those who worship no God save the Creator, and who obey no law save the emanation of Supreme Wisdom.—Parents! do you fear your God? do you dread to appear before Him with the sin of neglect, of apostacy, upon your conscience? Then hasten to initiate your children into the covenant, and let them not have occasion in after-life to accuse you of being the cause that they are not members of the Jewish community. It is true, that it is the duty of every Israelite to assume the covenant himself, if his parents have been neglectful of the commandment; but what reason have you to expect, that your children will be sufficiently strong in faith to submit to the law, when you thought it unreasonable and cruel, or unnecessary, in their infancy? —Let me impress it solemnly on your mind, that it is no small crime to cut off an entire household, or an entire family, from communion with Israel. We

know well enough that but few temporal advantages are to be gained by this communion; perhaps the knowledge of our being Israelites may be an injury to our advancement; for as yet the prejudice against our name and our religion have not vanished from the face of the earth. If now you value the fleeting advantages of life so much as to deny your children their rights as Jews; or if you are so weak in faith as to neglect as unwise and unimportant what we deem of the first necessity: you will have incurred a responsibility which will weigh heavily against you on the day of trial. Besides this, what avails all your seeming religious conduct in other respects, what use can be in your coming to the house of God and claiming affinity with and the rights of Israelites: if you are determined, that with your death your family are to be cast out from the community of the Lord?—Or do you believe, that in the progress of time the old covenant will fall into disuse, and that symbolical or imaginary rites will take its place, and that among such Jews your children will be welcome members? You greatly err, if so you think; for trust in the word of God, trust in Him whose promises have never deceived, the covenant of Abraham will never cease to be revered and observed by his latest descendants. For what does the text say: והיתה בריתי בבשרכם לברית עולם "And my covenant shall be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant?" Now this is both a commandment and a prophecy. As a commandment it is certain and undeniable that for thousands of years the covenant has not alone been observed, but has been highly prized as a glorious gift by the children of Israel. And as a prophecy, I will merely say, that as great

dangers have passed over us as are likely ever to occur again; and that amidst all the persecutions we had to endure and all our own apostacies this ordinance never was forgotten or unobserved. Ay, when the heathen oppressors prohibited the holy ordinance under pain of death, the mothers in Israel risked even life itself to obey the will of God; and in every age and every land the state of uncircumcision was considered a disgrace upon the sons of Jacob.—If therefore you wish that your children shall not be cast out, now and for ever, from the community of the Lord: neglect not to fit them by your own act to be worthy members of Israel's household; reflect that their apostacy, if they should be driven to worship strange gods, will rest upon your own souls; and that we, the sons of Jacob, will never hold them as brothers who like us bear not the seal of the covenant. And do you not tremble at the thought, that your descendants shall be mixed up with the nations of the earth? prize you not the holy privilege, the sacred birthright of being the followers of ONE God, the inheritors of the merits of Abraham, the followers of the law of Moses?—You yourselves are elated at the thought that *you* are adorers of God, the believers in the one, undivided, unchanging UNITY: and yet you care not to hand down this prerogative to your children? You feel that a high destiny is yours; you are convinced that the doctrines your parents taught you, that the creed you imbibed with your mother's milk, that the confession you early breathed, "The Lord our God the Lord is ONE," are thoughts worthy of the unending God: and yet you idly cast your offspring into the arms of unbelief, of false worship, of

ideas uncongenial to Scripture, unworthy of the holy everblessed Creator? You would be shocked, were any one to invite you to join another religion, to forswear directly your allegiance to Jacob's God: yet do you feel the same regard for your children's future happiness, when you exclude them by your own sinning from the congregation of the faithful!—Perhaps you feel indifferent about religious duties; perhaps you are tinctured with infidelity: and you neglect therefore the commandment, because you do not believe in its necessity! Even then your conduct is unwise.—For understand, the time may come when your convictions may become stronger, when unbelief may yield to a firm faith in the truth of Scripture and the necessity of obedience to the commandments: how will you then do, when you find yourselves surrounded by children NOT of the covenant, by sons who have NO RIGHT, NO PART IN ISRAEL?—Or why will you not leave to your children the choice of being Israelites or not? The covenant can do them no bodily or mental injury; it is only an acknowledgment that in the flesh they belong to the house of Israel; and surely it is their right, as well as it was yours at your birth, that nothing should be done by their parents which of necessity must make their entrance into the great body of Jews more painful and more difficult, and consequently more uncertain, than it ought to be. You were children of the covenant, and yet you rebelled; let your own children have the same choice; let them if they think proper become Israelites, if their conviction be stronger than yours, if they are more disposed to obedience than you; but let them never have cause to say, as many no doubt have said:

"It is my father's and mother's fault that I am not an Israelite."

If littleness of faith will then stand in the way of obedience, fathers and mothers in our ancient people! if a useless and causeless timidity will instil in you doubt and hesitation: reflect from what stock you have sprung. You are believing children of believing ancestors; I will never credit that there is one Israelite, no matter how irreligious, who is without religious belief. Yes, you are of that people to whom a trust in God is natural in all their backsliding; your forefathers were they who in their own persons and that of their children ever sanctified the name of the Lord; and therefore arouse yourselves and resolve to be worthy of such an enviable ancestry. Abraham was faithful, so was Isaac, so was Sarah, so was Zipporah, so was Joshua, so were the millions who have so long borne the name of the congregation of Jacob; and at this late day, when, after the clouds of oppression have been almost totally chased away, the sun of freedom begins to shed his benignant light also upon our long-oppressed race, it were surely ungrateful to the Deity to refuse to observe any longer on our part the terms of the covenant, when He, true and faithful to His word, has been our God as He was the God of Abraham, and never has withdrawn from us his light, his law, his knowledge, his protection, and his goodness, as we see clearly proved this day. Arise then in your might, beloved brothers! and in the words of the prophet (Isaiah li. 2): "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you; for one he was when I called him, and I blessed and increased him."—Yes, it was through faith that he

was blessed; alone he wandered forth, childless at the age of seventy-five, from his father's house, to follow the guidance of the Lord; childless as regards Sarah he was at the age of ninety-nine years: then he became perfect through obedience, through faith, and the covenant, and since that period he became through Isaac the father of a multitude of people, of a people that has maintained the glory of the Supreme in all parts of God's earth; of a people trodden down and pillaged, yet upheld by faith, living in the belief of the truth of the Lord, confiding in the justice of his decrees.—It was Sarah's happiness to shelter in her bosom the first of those circumcised on the eighth day; and like her companion through many a weary pilgrimage, through many a sore trial, she thus had a share in sacrificing in faith her own feelings, her own repugnance, in obedience to the will of her God. May her daughters feel the same call to sanctify! and may they hasten, in order to ward off danger from their husbands, and condemnation from their children, to cause these to enter into the covenant of Abraham. And may the fathers glory that none of their pledges of conjugal love are excluded from the household of our Lord; but that sons alike and daughters are children of salvation, heirs to the glory and hope promised unto Israel!

And thou, angel of the covenant, the messenger of happy tidings! be present in spirit, whenever this sacrifice is brought: bless, in the name of the everlasting God, each child and every parent; and proclaim before the mercy-seat of Glory, that we are true to the law, unforgetful of the ancient statutes, and submissive to the divine command. And join thy

prayer with ours, and entreat for salvation and redemption for all Israel, in order that it may be announced to us as in days of yore: "And I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy own blood; and I said unto thee, In thy own blood shalt thou live; and I said unto thee, In thy own blood shalt thou live." (Ezekiel xvi. 6.)

O God everlasting! remember the covenant and the fathers who early obeyed Thee, and have compassion on thy people Israel, and forgive them and bless them, because that Thou art their God, the merciful and long-suffering; and redeem them speedily, even for the sake of the blood of the covenant, and because of the promises Thou didst announce to their forefathers, thy servants. May this be thy will. Amen.

Heshvan 10th. } 5601.
November 6th. }

DISCOURSE XVI.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

No. I.

O Thou! who art nigh unto all who call upon Thee, be attentive to our prayers, and grant us the aid we need at thy hands. Bless our labour with productiveness, and deny not a happy increase to our undertakings. And give us contentment and peace of mind, to be satisfied with thy decrees, and enable us to fulfil

the duties of our appointment on earth. Guard us from evil, defend us from the malice of the ungodly, and let the light of thy law guide us securely on the path we should go; so that we may live and deserve the blessing which Thou hast promised to those who do thy will. Amen!

BRETHREN!

In reading the Bible, the record of the will of God and of the doings of the forefathers of our people and of those who came in contact with them, it is requisite that we should not mistake history for example, and look upon all the transactions we read of as acts which we may freely imitate. For the Scriptures nowhere say, that we should strive to copy any one of all those whose lives are recorded; and if we are even informed that one or the other of the Bible characters was a man after God's own heart, it by no means follows that every act of his life was praiseworthy. On the contrary, we are presented with the law and in it with the duties which we should fulfil, and the deeds which we should avoid; and by its standard therefore we are to measure our lives, to do nothing which is in opposition to the same, regardless what others may have done, and to judge likewise of the transactions which are related to us, whether they be examples to be followed, or instances of deficiency in virtue or faith which it is our duty to avoid.—The Bible is a veritable record of all matters which it concerns us to know; and as the great and good characters of which it speaks were like ourselves fallible and sinning: it gives us a faithful statement of their bad no less than their good deeds; since the

prophets and inspired writers, whilst recording the backslidings of God's favourites, knew that no one could be misled by the bad examples occasionally exhibited by these, because the rule was also transmitted according to which every action of theirs, or of other men, must either be justified or condemned. If then we find not a single perfect man in the Bible, if every one whose life is recorded was at times guilty of faults and want of faith: it is no more than saying, that the great men of ancient days were, like those of our own times, compounds of good and evil. And herein we must admire the perfect artlessness discoverable in the inspired writings. Nothing is told for effect; no elaborate defences of characters are any where to be found, and no extenuation is offered to make us think kindly of the acts which our own judgment must lead us to condemn, but which our feelings might extenuate if our sympathies were appealed to. It is therefore very questionable, whether the cause of religion can gain any thing by our offering, at this late day, excuses for acts which the Bible merely records; for if such a course had been deemed necessary, no doubt the Lord's spirit would have impelled the prophets to adopt the same. Their silence should accordingly teach us caution, how we attempt to clear the fame of those we justly prize of the charge of occasional disobedience and crime, which the holy Text has laid against them. We may safely maintain moreover, that infidelity gains nothing by the frailty of the servants of the Lord; nor can religion lose by our candidly admitting that human nature was the same in all ages; and that, though some have had greater light, no one was so perfect that he did not

at some period or other of his earthly existence call for and need the forgiveness of God.

I deemed this much necessary before introducing to you the text to which I wish to draw your attention to-day; inasmuch as it is an expression of censure on the life of David, just thrown out by the sacred historian in the account he presents to us of the last days of this renowned king of Israel. You are all well aware how highly David is valued as a man devoted to the Lord, still we find him occasionally in the light of a grievous offender; he retained the humility of a shepherd on the throne of Israel, still he suffered his inclinations to prompt him to the commission of incest and an act akin to murder. With all this he was a character of great excellence, and had a mind but rarely found among men. And in his repentance and his prayers we have an illustrious example of humiliation of the mortal before the Everlasting, and an incentive not to despair of mercy even when we have grievously sinned.—David had all his life been the mark for malice and persecution; and if you calculate what he suffered from external enemies, intestine confusion, and the misconduct of his own children, you will say that his days were by no means of an even and happy current. Even his last moments were embittered by the arrogance of one of his sons, who aimed to usurp the government before his father's lamp of life had expired. Now the Scriptures do not enter into long details to account for the heinous crime of Adonijah, but state simply:

ולא עצבו אביו מימיו לאמר מדוע ככה עשית :

מלכים א׳ א׳ ו׳ ;

"And his father had never aggrieved him, saying, Why hast thou done thus?" 1 Kings i. 6.

Parents! look well to the fate of the son of David, who had never been checked by his father. He was a man described as exceedingly handsome, as a favourite of many of his father's friends, and the oldest in point of birth of the yet remaining sons of the dying king. He must have known that it was his father's wish, by the express command of God, that the younger Solomon (1 Chronicles xxviii. 5), on account no doubt of his greater wisdom, should succeed to the government; and yet he would not forego his imaginary rights in deference to his father's will, but rebelled and proclaimed himself king by means of a faction in the state, who doubtless were in fear of losing their influence if the people were to elevate Solomon to the vacant throne.—Adonijah we are told had never been reproved by his father, and this indulgence, unwisely extended, caused him in this weighty point also to regard his own will merely: and the sequel was, that David during his lifetime appointed Solomon his successor; and the folly of the disappointed aspirant was at length the cause that he was slain by order of his brother as an enemy to the internal repose of the realm; since with his first failure he had not yet learned to rest content with a private station, for which he was better fitted than the rule over a people like Israel.

Parents! regard well the evil effects of indulgence to your children, and learn early to avoid a similar fault in your own families. The responsibility resting upon you is of the first magnitude; you are the

progenitors of beings who have an intelligent soul, and a mixed disposition which both prompts to good and to evil. The Lord, we may freely say without employing the words figuratively, has placed in your hands intelligent souls for your safe-keeping; as we read in Psalm cxxvii. 3: "Lo! children are a heritage of the Lord;" and it is your business, the employment of your whole life, to see that no neglect of yours should jeopard or injure their earthly or heavenly happiness. Understand, though you have a claim upon them as their bodily parents, there is yet ONE who is your and their Author, and who has consequently a claim upon your own selves, and a superior right in your children, and He has a just title to demand of you a due care and watchfulness over the charges He has intrusted to your temporary custody. You must therefore begin at the very outset to educate them with correct principles, and to train them early in the way they should go.—Let us endeavour to sketch a plan of domestic education. The infant of a few months old has some penetration, and it speedily contrives ways and means to satisfy its cravings. If any object strikes its fancy and its weak powers prevent it from seizing the same, it will probably cry and weep till it be satisfied, or till it find its striving ineffectual. If the child succeeds but once in thus gaining its point, it will to a certainty repeat the experiment to gain its end by a few tears opportunely applied. Here now begins the duty of the mother, and it is her province to discover whether the infant's petulance proceed from pain or a perverse disposition. If from pain she should of course apply soothing remedies, whether internal or

otherwise, to remove the cause of suffering; but if she is convinced it is mere wilfulness, it would be highly injudicious to *bribe* it into quiet. Although a noisy child is very troublesome and unpleasant, it is much better both for its own sake and that of the parents that it should weep and fret, till exhaustion at length produce quiet and submission. It is of course out of the question to reason with a small child; a passive overcoming of a perverse disposition is therefore perhaps the only remedy, and it is requisite that it should be employed despite of its apparent unpleasantness.

Another duty springs from this consideration as a necessary consequence of what we have advanced. It is, that it is unwise for the mother to surrender her child into the care of servants, even at the tenderest age. It is natural that a servant, the best even of her class, should endeavour to make her task as easy as possible, and to gain the favour of the mistress by quieting her charge at all hazards. I will not now mention the danger of bodily injury, arising from giving it sedative or stupefying medicines, though this too has been done; but confine myself merely to the moral evil of spoiling the disposition by early indulgence. The mother, as a professor of our faith, is not at liberty to divest herself of the duty incumbent on her, both by nature and religion, of watching over the moral progress of her offspring. If the child were sick, even slightly, the *world* would call her unfeeling, if she were to leave it in the hands of a nurse and go about seeking her pleasures abroad: how much more has the moralist a right to tax her with neglect, if she is so callous to its moral happiness, as to leave the development of its dawning mind

in hands who can naturally feel no inducement, except in rare instances, to do what is asked of them with the least more labour than it is absolutely requisite. There are among those who undertake the charge of infants females of excellent endowments, whom poverty or adverse circumstances compel to enter the service of their fellow-beings; there are such who in a menial station are anxious to discharge the duties they have assumed with honour and fidelity; but they are not so general as to render it a safe thing for parents to transfer their prerogative, or their duty rather, to strange hands; and besides, how can the mother expect that her child shall be well cared for by others for the sake of the small pittance of weekly wages, if the ties of nature cannot secure for it the mother's superintendence?—I do not mean to say that the mother is bound to be perpetually with the child, that she is to take no recreation, and is not permitted to leave it for a moment with others; no! but that she is not at liberty to rest satisfied if the child does not trouble her, and to be content to leave it in the hands of servants three-fourths of the day, provided it does not happen to be sick.—In short, education should begin from the cradle; the child must be thwarted if it is petulant and unruly; its temper and inclination must be curbed as soon as it displays any undue anger or makes unreasonable demands; and it must not be forgotten, that indulgence once commenced, it may be very difficult, if not altogether impossible, to remedy the fault in after-life.

As soon as the child begins to speak and his reason becomes in a degree more developed, the difficulty,

which hitherto existed in discovering the source of infantile sorrow, will of course be in great degree removed, and consequently the remedies to be applied will be more apparent. But as at this period children are perhaps more interesting than at any other, especially to their parents, greater care should be used to guard against indulgence. Moreover, as speech is now in his possession, the child can demand more intelligibly what he wants than formerly by mere dumb signs and motions. And if you value the peace of your house and the welfare of your offspring, be resolute to persevere in your refusals, and to promise nothing which you might think injurious to the child. It is no use whatever in first saying no, and then to be persuaded or coaxed into yielding; for, depend upon it, children are very quick-sighted, and soon discover, if yielded to, that they can gain the mastery over their parents by petulance and perseverance. They will at first try the experiment in small matters; but they will soon rise in their demands, and increase with an increase of years and opportunity in exacting compliance from the over-good nature of their elders. Make it then a rule, not to refuse any thing that is necessary or reasonable to the child's comfort, or occasionally even to his pleasure; for it is well at times to encourage him, though not by offering a direct bribe for obedience. But if you have refused, let no tears or entreaty move you from your purpose. It may seem hard to be so persevering in refusing a trifle which is perhaps of no importance whatever; but it becomes of importance as soon as it may tend directly or indirectly to relax wholesome domestic discipline; and the only way to avoid this

disagreeable alternative is not to refuse in haste and without due consideration. If you are then resolute in your determination, and exhibit withal no unnecessary petulance or testiness in your expression of dissent: the child will speedily learn that he has nothing to gain by a teasing perseverance, and the father's refusal or the mother's no will then be a sufficient answer to all his silly demands, especially if he finds that every thing reasonable is readily conceded. Let me sum up this part in a few words: Obedience should be made one of the first things which the child should be able to recollect; it ought to be the earliest principle instilled in the mind; and the necessary consequence will be, that obedience in maturer years will become more easy on the part of the son or daughter, and be more easily exacted by the father or mother.

Another observation I have to make in respect to children from one to three years old: it is, to be very guarded against nourishing the principles of envy and revenge at this early age. It may be necessary, as a punishment for disobedience, to deny to one child the indulgence granted to another; but great care must be taken not to excite the feeling of envy in the delinquent; tell him, that it is a consequence of obedience in the brother that he is more favoured, and that you hope that he will to-morrow merit the same by doing what is right. It were perhaps better at times not to bestow the distinctive mark of favour before the other child, if you know from observation that he is of a sensitive disposition. Be judicious in this point especially, as it is not unfrequently the case that quarrels between members of a family have been

the consequence of early favouritism; and it is unfortunately too true, that parents themselves are by degrees led to look upon one or the other of their children with more kindness than the others. This is radically wrong; it not only fails in correcting as a punishment, but it becomes a downright incentive to stubbornness and a carelessness in doing the duties demanded: if the child should be induced to think that he is ill-treated, especially if he discovers that another's faults are either overlooked altogether, or not so severely visited as his own.—With regard to the feeling of revenge, it will no doubt be self-evident to you, that there are a thousand incentives to excite this unholy passion in the mind of the young. If any thing unpleasant occurs to them, they will naturally appeal to their parents for protection and redress; and if you have to interfere in their behalf, be it against a servant, a stranger, or one of their own relatives, do it in a mild, decorous manner; do not let your children see, that you think they have suffered a great wrong; do not go about executing justice in a boisterous, excited manner: do not speak loudly to the delinquent in the presence of the offended party; for all such exhibitions only encourage the children in tale-bearing and seeking of revenge for every, the slightest, injury. Nor is it correct to pacify even the child, if he should accidentally get injured, by striking a chair or any other inanimate object, as though it had offended; for this too encourages in a very reprehensible manner the feeling of revenge, which should be repressed in a good system of education, as unfortunately it is but too apt to be called into play in later years by associates and circum-

stances. Moreover, such a procedure is irrational, since the imaginary punishment of the imaginary delinquent is merely calculated to pacify a child without any thought or feeling except blind vengeance; and it is evidently requisite to exhibit in your own conduct towards your children, even in early youth, nothing that hereafter you should have to tell them was the effect of folly. You lower thereby your authority, and derogate from your dignity as moral guides, and it is of the utmost importance that this should not take place. For if you really wish to be not only beloved but also respected by your children, you must endeavour that in their eyes at least you should stand as high, if not higher as moral preceptors, than any body else; because by this means the task of governing your household will be much lightened, and rendered more pleasant to yourselves, and more profitable to your offspring.

If you discover that your child has any evil propensity, no matter how young he is, do not withhold punishment. For if the fault is curable, it is more easily so in the beginning, and when it first shows itself, than when it has become confirmed and grown into an inveterate habit. Little children are men in miniature, and all the germs of a good or bad character are existing in them no less than in adults: hence the necessity of treating their foibles as the sources of crime in later years. For instance, should you see one of your children snatch at any little thing you give to another, or demand a larger portion for his share: you may safely say, that this is a display of covetousness, and you should lose no time in counteracting it.—If you see that your little son is fond of teasing domes-

tic animals, and taking a delight in inflicting pain upon them, or if you detect him in pinching or beating his brothers and sisters: you have cause to tremble for this early exhibition of ferocity, and you must lose no time and pretermit no diligence to remove so hateful a characteristic.—If you see him indulge in violent outbursts of rage, it is not well to buy him him off or to bribe him into good humour; for this would be paying him a premium for a display of an odious feature; but the evident duty of a religious parent is to endeavour to subdue this failing, both by mildness, as far as prudent, and a well-timed severity where this may advantageously come into play.—It is no doubt true, that a father or mother, particularly towards an only child, may think it hard to be so severe; but let us ask, what benefit can result from a winking at faults which will become daily more apparent and fixed? You would be truly ashamed, were your son at the age of twelve to show a covetous, cruel, or quarrelsome temperament; you would be grieved to hear any one say, "What an unmannered, rude boy this is?"—Why then will you not begin at once, before his character is formed, to give his mind a proper bent? Or think you that you will be able to remedy the defect of early indulgence by greater rigour and severity at a later period? You should however consider that, if your son could master you when an infant, he is not likely to submit to control as he advances in years; and even if you are determined to curb him then, and grant even that you should succeed, does it not strike you, that you will have to undertake the unpleasant task of thwarting him at last, and to cause him thereby grief and

vexation fully as much as though you had always restrained him? If therefore you mean to govern, govern at once; and you are more likely to succeed in the discharge of your duty, by the early exercise of a little authority and the exhibition of a little severity, than you could hope for at a later date by a positive insisting and an undue portion of rigour, which, whether you will or not, will then be requisite, if you wish to have any control over your family, in even a small degree.

Another point must be looked after in early childhood: it is, that you insist upon strict truth from your child. I know not, whether it may not be a natural impulse to deny any thing we have done wrong in; at all events the smallest child will say "no" if detected in any fault; though even this may, like many other defects, be the consequence of bad example, of which too much is always presented to us in every stage of life. Be this however as it may, insist (I need not say with mildness, for this is a matter understood of itself) upon the strictest truth from the youngest child; reason with him if need be, and explain in simple words the odiousness of falsehood; tell him how despicable it is to be caught in an untruth, and that generally, if not always, every equivocation will be detected, and bring additional disgrace for every offence, no matter how small, which might have been perhaps forgiven, if the truth had at once been confessed. But whilst you demand unvarying truth, be cautious that you do not deviate from it yourselves; never threaten a punishment, if you mean to be begged off; let not the child see that you are wavering and mean not to do what you say; so also if you

promise any reward, be sure to fulfil your words; it will have a very happy effect upon the young mind, and teach it imperceptibly to love truth and to abhor a falsehood.—In the same manner you must repress the pernicious habit of tale-bearing among the family; endeavour to instil daily into every one under your charge to practise forbearance and good nature; tell him, that the offence was perhaps not committed on purpose, and seek to discover whether the offended party might not have committed the first aggression. It is certainly mortifying to a high-spirited child to find his complaints dismissed in such a manner, and to have the wrong laid to his charge; but what matters it that he suffers pain in this way? can it do him any injury? is his temper not improved thereby? is not turbulence repressed? malevolence rebuked? and contention stifled? Now reverse the case,—suppose in your paternal fondness you would listen to the accusation brought by your son against a neighbour's child, and were without investigation to insist upon your friend's punishing the delinquent for the injury which has, for all you may know, been accidentally done, or perhaps in self-defence; let your son know that you got the offender well whipped for the outrage, and show your evident satisfaction at the result, and recount the minute circumstances to your wife in the presence of the accuser: do you not thus tell him to persevere in his course? to do whatever mischief he pleases to others? that you only will believe him—your darling—your child? Or perhaps you will tell him in so many words, that you will see him righted after this foolish fashion: and as sure as you live, you lay the foundation for a tricky, quarrelsome,

and highly unamiable character.—Understand distinctly, education should tend to correct the wicked propensities of the human heart, to counteract the evils of bad examples: and surely your system would be worse than no education at all, if you encourage and by that means foster one of the worst traits to which we are naturally addicted.

A domineering propensity is also occasionally shown by young children; they will at times insist upon having this thing or the other, and will not unfrequently aim a blow at a servant or an older brother or sister if they are not immediately gratified. If you discover this feeling, you must oppose it at all hazards; for if persevered in and not early eradicated, it will grow with every day, and cause them much unhappiness as they advance in life, and render them truly odious in the eyes of others. The more wealth you have, the more you are likely to leave to your children: the stricter you must insist on an humble and kind bearing from them to all around them, especially to servants, who naturally must feel some reluctance in informing you of such a fault, unless your sense of religion demands of you, to ask for a correct statement of your children's conduct in your absence.—Observation has taught us, that children are not unacquainted with their parents' superior power which wealth gives them, and that they are sufficiently apt to avail themselves of all the advantages arising therefrom; especially as rich men's children are only too often the objects of regard to visitors and others who may in some way or another wish to propitiate their parents' favour. If you are therefore judicious, and can yourselves set a proper

value upon the glittering dross which we are all striving for; if you yourselves are impressed with the unsubstantial tenure you have on worldly goods and on your mortal life: you will pretermit no effort to enforce humility and patience, and to insist by all means upon an amiable and decorous behaviour even to subordinates. Your children in this case also as in others should have your example to teach them the duty practically, which your words call for in theory; you yourselves should be kind to servants, mild in your reproofs of them, and never show any arrogance or pride to these and all others under your control and direction.—You may think, perhaps, that your children will always be provided for, and that they, who work for money, are not of sufficient importance to deserve protection against the favourite offspring of wealth and affluence; but you err if you judge so. It is not so much the protection of the subordinates, though this also is of vital moment, as the improvement of the children themselves, the rendering them amiable, which can be attained only by the means we have indicated: it is your duty to improve their minds, and clear away thence all those evil qualities which may become prejudicial to their peace and future happiness; and as we said, and as the good sense of every man will tell him, no quality is more hateful even in the great and exalted than arrogance and overbearingness.—Besides this, you ought to reflect that, in the constant mutations which are going on in the world, no one can determine, whether the servants now at your beck and call may not at some future day become exalted above your children, and whether these may not be compelled to

ask of those, who once served you and them for pay, for aid to assist them in their necessities. Now grant that this should never be, still a man may become useful to another in a thousand great and little ways; and the love of a menial secured may stand in good stead to you and them in situations where the assistance of the great is of no avail.—In addition to all this the servant is a child of God, and as such claims your protection, the more so because he is subject to your power. This therefore is an additional reason, why you should insist upon a conciliatory conduct from your children, the younger as well as the older, to your domestics, and show to them that you likewise are not backward in this important duty, which you as servants of God must exact of them.

If by the visitation of the Lord you have been deprived of one or more children, let this be no excuse for undue indulgence extended to those that remain. It were indeed making a bad use of the admonition of Heaven, to convert it into a curse (for so indulgence is) to intelligent, accountable beings. The mother may perhaps fancy, that in the cry of the child before her she is impelled to kindness by the memory of those who were taken; but it is a mere weakness which may readily be overcome by a little fortitude, by considering that to indulge the living cannot restore the dead. It is surely a singular infatuation, which can only be explained by supposing that the parents attach a strangely greater value to a child, because they were deprived of others, to overlook faults in the survivor which otherwise would have been checked; and it requires no profound thinking to show that it is unwise for many reasons. First, it

looks like dissatisfaction with the will of God, and a stubbornness in submitting to his irrevocable decree; and secondly, the child so educated will not have any cause to thank his parents for spoiling him, not to mention other considerations which readily present themselves.

We will now sum up this part of our subject briefly. It is the duty of the parents conjointly, to watch over the dispositions of their children from the earliest age; to check every fault, and to counteract every evil propensity; not to be moved by tears, by petulance or perseverance, but to act with their responsibility to the Lord before them. This supervision must not be intrusted to others, no matter who they are; but father and mother themselves must fulfil the trust which they have received, and to execute which they are mutually pledged to one another.—They should reflect that David, who is styled "a man after God's heart," is censured in the holy Scriptures for a neglect of his authority in the case of one of his sons, who in consequence met with an untimely and violent death. It is not to be supposed that early indulgence will have this unhappy effect in all instances; but the resulting evils are sufficiently great and appalling without supposing extreme cases. Still if we could examine carefully the lives of great malefactors and sinners, we would no doubt find, that the early folly of their parents laid the foundation for their temporal or permanent unhappiness.—Let me appeal to you then, brothers and sisters of the house of Jacob! to fulfil your trust in the spirit and letter of the law, and cause thereby that your children may live long and happy in the fear of the Lord, and bless their

earthly parents who early restrained their sinful propensities, and pointed out to them thus the road which leads to the mansions of everlasting felicity!

May the Lord our God enlighten our spirit with his wisdom, and bless us with his grace, even as He was with our fathers! Amen.

Heshvan 24th. } 5601.
Novemb. 20th. }

DISCOURSE XVII.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

No. II.

Unto Thee, O our Lord! be praise and glory, for all the grace and truth which Thou hast done to thy servants, for the many innumerable benefits which we have received at thy hands, for the many acts of goodness which, undeserving though we be, were showered down upon us in liberal measure, and in seasons of affliction no less than in hours of rejoicing. O! that we might all be alive to the debt of gratitude we owe unto Thee, and that all might endeavour to merit thy beneficence by obeying thy holy word, and spreading a knowledge thereof unto those not yet acquainted with thy service and worship. But do Thou! in thy mercy, give us the spirit of counsel and understanding, that we may be enabled to teach the truth even as it is pleasing to Thee, and to bring many

precious souls to seek for shelter and salvation under the shadow of the wings of thy glory. May our eyes see this, and may all Israel be witnesses of the outpouring of thy holy spirit at the coming of the redeemer, thy messenger. Amen!

BRETHREN!

In my preceding address I endeavoured to sketch out a simple and comprehensive plan of a domestic education of young children in accordance with the principles of our Heaven-born religion; and I trust that the rules which I considered it my duty to lay before you will be found both practicable and consonant with reason. And I candidly believe that the duty of early government of the household is, like all other duties demanded by our law, the best promoter of domestic happiness and a useful life in after-years.—Let us to-day pursue the subject in its more distinct branches and later applicability.—We are taught in the Proverbs of Solomon:

חנך לנער על פי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה:
משלי כב' ו':

"Train up the boy in the way he should go: and even when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6.

Another version of this verse is, "Train the boy according to his capacity," which, although slightly differing from the common translation, does by no means change its meaning. The wise king of Israel wished to impress upon the parents the duty of watching over the conduct and progress of the child, and to afford him such instruction, suited to his ca-

pacity and years, as will engrave itself deeply upon his mind, and will not be eradicated or forgotten, even when the frosty years of old age have long since banished the days of youth, and the early instructors are laid low in the silent grave. To insure this happy result it is necessary that you should begin correctly, and start in such a manner that you need not retrace any step you have once taken. Begin therefore with correct principles, and inform the child early, in a manner suited to his years, of the duties which he owes to God as the creature of the Supreme, and to man as a member of the human family at large. And as soon as he is able to learn teach him, after the good custom of our people, to glorify the Lord by the words of his mouth; make him early familiar with the truth that He our God, is ONE, that He is the sole Ruler and Governor of the universe, and that from Him alone proceeds all the good we enjoy. Let his first thoughts be fixed upon the profession of our faith; let him know by heart, as the first of his acquisition in knowledge, the *Shemang*, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One;" let him learn it too in the sacred tongue, which, together with the law, is a blessed inheritance from our fathers. Instruct him in simple and to him intelligible words how to address the throne of Grace; so that he may at once be made to feel that he is a dependent on the bounty of the Supreme, and a servant of a spiritual Being who watches over all his acts, and rewards the good and punishes the evil.

In doing this, however, you should speak to him as a rational being, and not make use of superstitious terrors to frighten him into an unwilling obedience,

nor attribute to the Deity feelings and qualities which are foreign to the Bible doctrines. Our God is so exalted, so pure, so unspeakably holy, that every attempt to invest Him with human frailties is blasphemous in the extreme; and in serving Him we cannot go farther astray from true piety, by any misconduct whatever, than by an indulgence in superstition. It is thus your duty, as guardians of an accountable spirit, to make your child a devoted worshipper, not an ignorant bigot, not a terrified believer in nonentities. Religion in its most extended sense is the diametrically opposite to such folly; and it is therefore your first duty to teach the true worship without admixing imaginary fears and ideal terrors. Hence you must not permit on any account to let your child be entertained by ghost-stories or the exploded notions of witchcraft, lest his reason become obscured by such revolting inconsistencies. And there is danger of this being the case even now; for it is true, though an apparent paradox, that the mind of most human beings has a fondness for the marvellous and for harrowing recitals; they are a species of stimulants which the vitiated taste will drink in with the ear, as the corrupt drunkard swallows the intoxicating poison, as though it were a pleasant and wholesome beverage. If therefore early impressions of superstition are permitted to be made, if the child is suffered to become acquainted with such absurdities as will cause him to invest with fancied terrors many an innocent action, and people with imaginary beings the receptacles of the dead or dark corners in your dwelling: you expose him to one of two great evils. The first is, that by mixing superstition in his early train-

ing, in ever so small a measure, you may cause him in maturer years to run the danger of embracing infidelity and unbelief, when he discovers that the terrors of his youth are idle, and when a defective education has blended these intimately with the everlasting truths of religion. For in the presumption of boyish arrogance, many are induced to judge from uncertain premises and hastily drawn conclusions; they think they have a thorough knowledge of every abstruse subject presented to them, because they have acquired a little information in popular sciences, or a superficial acquaintance with one or the other of the learned professions. If they now have any cause to connect religion with acknowledged falsities, they are too apt to reject both; because they do not weigh the evidences and the overwhelming authority by which the former is supported, though the latter rest on no foundation whatever. Now it is against this unhappy result that you must guard the child from the beginning; let therefore acknowledged truths alone be brought to his view, that he may not have any occasion to unlearn or reject as false and unreasonable any thing he has once imbibed under your instruction or by your sufferance.—The second is, that by making the child early familiar with false conceptions, you may leave an impression which cannot be effaced; and there is, therefore, besides the just mentioned danger of infidelity, which may possibly be the consequence of an acquaintance with superstition, another but little less injurious. If the mind has become once saturated with horrors, it is with some temperaments likely enough that the impression will never wear away, but give a colouring to thoughts, feelings and

actions throughout an entire life, and unfit man for a true, virtuous course and a sincere reverence of God.

It may perhaps be said, that the *age* of superstition has passed away, that general enlightenment will cause a greater tendency to an entire unbelief in all spiritual beings, than an adoption of acknowledged nonentities. There may be truth in this remark, with regard to the majority of men in civilized countries; but experience has also shown, that there are many exceptions, and that the mind can be warped by false inculcations to adopt any absurdity which can enter the imagination of the veriest madman that ever lived. Superstition and mysticism the most horrible have existed side by side with the most reckless infidelity;* and daily experience proves that at this very hour there are men,† nay among the most enlightened, who put faith in ridiculous pretensions to revelation which would have disgraced the age of the crusaders.—Now a superstitious mind is constantly alive to unfounded apprehensions, and invests with power things which are either powerless, or are at all events innocuous; and such fancies will at length destroy a healthy religious sentiment, and banish perhaps a reliance on the protection of the Supreme. Moreover, superstition, by substituting a

* The atheism of the French Revolution was accompanied by the existence of the theophilanthropists, and the goddess of reason. —(Since this was written the new superstition of spiritual manifestations has taken its rise, and it has probably not yet seen its culminating point, while in many persons the belief in true religion has become completely extinguished by it to all appearance. June '27.)

† Mormons, and other similar fanatics.

resort to acts forbidden by the letter and spirit of the law, not unfrequently engenders fanaticism, which is a furious adherence to notions bearing a semblance to religion, which are far, very far, distant from this holy principle; and this will superinduce at times deeds of barbarity at which sober reason has cause to shudder. Yes! go to yonder hill and survey the crowd gathering below; hear their shouting! behold their evident ecstasy! and do you know the cause? Watch well! see yon youth decked out in fantastical garments—see the maiden in similar habiliments following her ardent brother! behold around them are aged men bearing in their hands images of what they call their saviour! and regard how the youth and the maiden fix their gaze steadily before them or on vacant space, carefully shunning to cast a look upon the idolatrous figures which surround them! Now hear the populace heaving forth their curses at the unbelievers—see the lighted stake, the executioners heaping up the fagots for the intended sacrifice! and what think you betokens this horrible, this fantastical exhibition? It is a noble scion of Israel's household, it is a high-souled maiden worthy of the ancient mothers, who are in the enemies' power, and are led forth to execution, because they will not forswear the God who redeemed our fathers! Their thoughts are turned to the Lord of their spirits, their souls are in communion with the sole King, the everlasting God; they will not listen to the false priests who offer them life, honour, and wealth, if they will forsake the renowned name which they inherited from their ancestors; and from mouth to mouth of the immense crowd it is whispered that the infidels remain unrepented,

(for so it is called in their vain delusion,) and they heap maledictions upon the unfortunate, and eagerly thirst for their martyrdom. Now the devoted sister and the ardent brother for the last time on earth cast a fond look at each other; their cheek is not blanched, their eye does not quail; but persevering in their high resolve, their arms are bound to the stake, and soon the flames ascend in curling wreaths over their heads, and with their last breath they seal their devotion and their love for the Holy One and his law; and their spirits speed hence to those realms of bliss, where truth needs not to fear the demon of falsehood, where the sword strikes not to wound the innocent, where the flame does not consume the followers of our holy faith.—And yet their persecutors think that they are doing an acceptable service to the God of love! They murder the innocent, and fancy that He, who said that "from the hands of all living He would require the soul of man," could look upon such barbarity with complaisance and favour! So direful are the effects of false belief, so repugnant to humanity the actions which it often prompts!—You may say that the picture just drawn belongs to times that have long since passed away: we will admit it in a measure; but human feelings and frailties are the same in all ages, and we cannot tell how far a system of folly may be carried, if no steps are taken to guard against its extension or its reëntrance, if it even should have been totally banished. Besides this we are occasionally witnesses of isolated deeds of barbarity and self-immolation, produced by a wrong bent of the mind, when it is under the influence of moody melancholy, caused by a false view of the attributes of

God: such as the ideas of a total rejection from grace, an impossibility of repentance, an implacability of the Merciful One, a supposition of atonement through a mediator only, and similar unscriptural errors. Happily these errors are not properly belonging to our people; we are, perhaps, freer than any other class of men from gross superstition and false belief; we may freely say that Israelites have for the greater portion a general and correct knowledge of the unchangeable truths of the Bible: it is nevertheless not to be denied that minor superstition has not been always foreign to us, and that we have often borrowed the erroneous notions of the different countries in which we happened to live. I need not entertain you with the details of the confident belief in the existence of witches and ghosts, in the efficacy of charms and conjuration, of good and evil omens, of signs and portents, which belief is even now not altogether extinct, to convince you of the correctness of the assertion: your own knowledge of the subject is amply sufficient without extraneous proof. Nor is it necessary to investigate how such absurdities were ever engrafted upon the doctrines of Holy Writ, which energetically teach the opposite views. Enough for our purpose that we in the process of time did not escape the contaminating influence of error which ignorance had caused to prevail among gentiles; and hence we are bound to warn those who are to watch over the education of our children, be they parents, guardians, or teachers, to use every effort to guard against the growth of superstition, and not to permit their charges to become acquainted with such absurdities, if it can be avoided. So likewise they should

be very careful that children hear nothing of the erroneous ideas concerning the Deity entertained by our gentile neighbours which are contrary to our religion; since these errors will more or less check the growth of true piety, and prevent them from acquiring an early or correct comprehension of the attributes of the Lord which are contained in the law.

The subject of correct ideas of religion and the errors of superstition is of so great importance, and occupies necessarily so ample a field, that a moralist might well be excused, if he were to spend many hours in depicting it in its various ramifications. But as our present object is merely to regard it in connexion with a general system of education, we must leave it in the unfinished state it has been presented to you; since it is intended more to give you means for reflection than a complete illustration of the benefits of truth and the injury resulting from falsehood. You will however readily distinguish, that the duty demanded of you to inculcate pure, unadulterated, religious doctrines, in early youth, is of the highest importance; and that consequently you, as parents, are also bound to watch yourselves in this part of education over the development of the intellect of your child, and to see that through the agency of others no errors are instilled which might prevent the spread of truth and piety. Hence it is requisite, that the child be not left in the society of those who would either from ignorance or design counteract this part of domestic education; and if you have to intrust him occasionally to domestics, forbid them energetically to indulge him with superstitious stories, or to instruct him in any manner in doctrines foreign

to our religion.—So also, you should never use terrors of a mental nature to frighten him, or to make strange noises, as though an extraordinary being were coming to inflict some indefinite vengeance for any act of disobedience. All this is totally wrong. You, the parents, should make your words respected by every one in your house; in all worldly matters your orders should be law, obedience to which you should by all means enforce; but more than all your child should be told that he is bound to obey you, because you are his parents, who provide for his wants and watch over him with fondness and care, that, as far as lies in your power, no evil shall happen to him; be in earnest in your determination, and command nothing about which you may afterwards be indifferent; and you will have no occasion to call in the aid of frightful figures to insure obedience.—In the same manner, when you think proper to reward your child, do not employ the agency of a supernatural being* to bring the gift to him; a few times he may acquiesce in the truth of what you tell him; but he soon will see through the shallow device, and detect the pious fraud of his progenitors. It weakens your authority, when you are convicted in the mind of your child of deception; but reward directly, tell him you give him this or that trifle (it is no use to give valuable things), because he has done his duty in a manner to elicit

* As an Israelite I must condemn the system of making presents on gentile festivals, and to use the common phrases that such or such an imaginary being has brought them. Israelites have nothing to do with those seasons and ideas, and they had better omit giving presents then, and reserve them for Purim or Pessach, and tell the young folks the reason for this procedure.

your approbation, and that you hope he will often give you cause to show him your satisfaction. Although now I would recommend a rare resort to rewards, as children should early learn to love virtue for its own sake and not on account of pay: still if rewards are used, let the child have an opportunity to connect them with the approbation of his parents and his own good conduct; he will thus be taught to love his duty, and perform it to please his kind father and his affectionate mother, who are so anxious to make him happy.

To encourage the child in obedience it is a good plan to render the gradual execution of religious duties the means to be employed. There are happily in our religion certain offices by which youths can become gradually initiated into the way they should go; and tell your child therefore that he shall be a participant in the others as soon as he shows himself worthy by a previous observance of the duties already open for him. Among these initiatory acts we may reckon the offices in the Synagogue, which can happily be held up as objects of emulation to young children even, and which should be attainable only by obedience and good conduct. So also the reading of the weekly section of the prophets, attainable only through diligence at studies and worthy behaviour; it will give a degree of zest to youths, and make them look upon themselves as having a portion in the service of the Lord, and stimulate them to become yet more familiar with the ceremonies and observances, and to induce them to be careful in supporting the degree in religious standing they have already attained. There are so many

other acts by which a gradual initiation may be brought about by judicious and religious parents, that it is not necessary to dwell any longer upon details which must at last be left to their good judgment. One thing, however, I must mention, that, as there are no mysteries in our law, you should endeavour to explain every observance as well as you can, exhibit the scope and extent thereof, and give the reason for its institution wherever the Scriptures give us such a reason; and where no cause is assigned, for instance in those laws called statutes or ordinances, you may, or rather should, tell your child at once that such commandments were instituted by the wisdom of God, in order to preserve Israel a distinct people among all other nations of the earth, to be consecrated to his service. You gain greatly by this exposition; for by expounding to him the reason, where this is discoverable, say for, instance, the observance of the Passover, in commemoration of our redemption from Egypt; the institution of the unleavened bread, to celebrate the unpreparedness of our forefathers when they were released from bondage; the annual Pentecost, to call to mind the promulgation of our heavenly code of Sinai,—you at once raise in your child a patriotic sentiment of attachment to Israel at large, and a desire to do something to become worthy of participating by his acts in the goodness and protection which the Lord has promised to his people.—You can in no manner whatever excite a greater love for religion; and by degrees he will endeavour to copy your actions without your being obliged to demand it from him; on the contrary, he will think himself favoured if you

take him with you to the house of God, if you permit him to go with you to the chambers of the sick, to be near you at the interring of the dead, and to have by your bounty the means to drop his trifle into the collection made for the poor. And if he sees you earnest in your conduct, the thought of doubting will not arise within his mind; and he will gradually become a willing, understanding, but not a blind, follower of the Mosaic code.

It evidently is therefore your duty not alone to show your child a holy example in your own persons, but to keep those from an intimate footing in your house, who speak slightingly of, or in opposition to religion. If you wish him to grow up entire with his God, you should withdraw him from evil communication; for, as we illustrated with superstition, the mind gradually becomes tainted with the corruption of unbelief and lukewarmness, if it is constantly or even occasionally exposed to the deleterious poison which flows from the mouth of the ungodly. Their agreeable manners and pleasant conversation are no excuse for your tolerating their intercourse; and if such persons are from necessity admitted to your fireside, you must insist upon their keeping silent on disputed matters of religion.—You may think it your duty to effect if possible their conversion; but do not dispute before your child, till he is old enough not to be affected by the doubts of your antagonist; for you cannot tell how an argument badly conducted by the defender of religion may operate injuriously upon the happiness of one, who may appear an uninterested listener. We will leave out of the question that arguing with an unbeliever seldom carries conviction

with it; since the haughty pride of the human heart not unfrequently refuses to yield, even if the arguments brought forward to sustain its positions are weak and untenable, and it often resorts to abuse and ridicule if nothing more tangible is at hand. I say, we will not take this danger into view, where the child may see sacred truths treated with contempt or levity; for even if this should not be, and you should succeed in silencing the arguments of your opponent, and he confess himself vanquished: still the bane of infidelity has been infused in your child's ear, and the danger has been incurred of having thereby shaken the before tranquil acquiescence in religious truths. It is not that religion is weak, or that its tenets are not defensible by the most cogent arguments; but still it is unwise to do any thing to chill the ardour of youth by exhibiting in its presence exemplifications of those wicked men, whom it is much better to know in theory only. It is deplorable enough that in riper years our constancy should be exposed to the temptations of the world, and to have our hopes attacked by the shallow arguments of a sensual philosophy, which attracts us because it promises a gratification of the passions undisturbed by the admonition of Scriptures; and surely it is best to let the days of early youth pass in tranquillity, and an entire acquiescence in paternal admonition, and the pious instruction of our first teachers. There is no question, but that much of irreligion is owing to an early unsettling of convictions by wicked associates, and by hearing the commandments spoken of lightly; for the Scriptures inveigh against evil companions for adults who possibly may be fortified by a long

course of reflection, how much more then should such be deprecated when they may tend to corrupt the mind of children. And these are the words of the first Psalm: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who doth meditate in his law day and night." Let it be therefore your endeavour to surround yourselves only with those who honour religion with words and actions, let those only be the inmates of your house from whom no bad examples are likely to operate on the mind of your child.—In this exclusion of irreligious persons there is no bigotry nor persecution; for as the guardians of the peace of your household you are as much bound to ward off dangers to the mental welfare, as you are sedulous to exclude the incendiary from destroying your domicil, whilst you are wrapt in unconscious sleep. And in this instance also, no less than in every other, prevention is far preferable to a cure; and it is almost reduced to a certainty, that the child, if not vitiated by a corrupting influence, will grow up gradually a true follower of religion.

Such a selection of associates around your table becomes the more necessary from our present state of dispersion in small numbers all over the world. We live in the midst of communities whose system of belief is not only different, but who reject totally, I may say the whole of, our ceremonial and religious observances, if we except a substitute for the Sabbath. The consequence is that this corrupting influence, I mean to say the different conduct of the majority, is active beyond all calculation, and it only requires the

addition of infidel or careless Jews to sap completely the foundation of faith in the individual, unless he is strongly fortified by a knowledge of our holy law and a uniform observance of its precepts. These requirements cannot be looked for in children; and hence it is evident, that they should hear and see nothing said or done in their immediate presence which is counter to the doctrines of our religion. By this means it is to be hoped that the spirit of true piety may be kept alive in the minds of your offspring, and they may live to transmit the same to succeeding ages, in its untarnished excellence and undiminished lustre.

As your child advances in years, you should adapt the government to his increasing intellectual capacity; and as soon as he is old enough for comprehending it, you should enforce obedience by persuasion, which should never degenerate into entreaty; for the parents should never be petitioners, if they mean to preserve the authority which nature has given them. Mildness coupled with earnest firmness should always be exhibited, and no relaxation of discipline should be accorded upon any pretence whatever. It is also your duty to keep cool, no matter what the offence of the child may be, and to judge with calmness of the degree of guilt which he has incurred. Where moral remedies fail of producing reformation or enforcing obedience, physical means should be resorted to, even to the use of the rod. Scriptures here give us a rule, which we should not set aside for all the fancies of modern theorists. For so says Solomon (Proverbs xiii. 24): "He that spareth the rod hateth his child; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." And herein too the blessed Creator sets us

an example; for when admonitions fail of working a reformation in man, punishment is sent to snatch the soul from the jaws of perdition. If therefore you truly love your child, if your views reach farther than the day, if you can bear to look upon his tears more than tolerate evil conduct: chastise him for every great dereliction, when you are convinced that mere words will fail of the desired effect. Cruelty, however, should not be indulged in, nor should punishment be inflicted whilst you are angry, nor before you have judged carefully of the degree of the wrong which you deem deserving of the rod. Reason with him, tell him wherein he has failed, prove to him why he deserves and obtains punishment: and it is highly probable, that one infliction of the rod will have a much happier effect in correcting error, than a thousand barbarous beatings in the moments of anger, where the child is but too apt to think himself ill-used, and which proceeding may produce a moodiness and a sullen yielding to a command, without the most remote thought of reformation. Consider that indulgence and undue severity are both calculated to produce a relaxation of discipline; for if both the parents are tyrannical, or if the father alone punishes with undue rigour, the offences committed in their absence will not be reported to them even by those who have cause to complain, as they will prefer not noticing the injury to having the child cruelly beaten or otherwise cruelly punished; and impunity thus obtained is eminently calculated to invite a repetition of the offence which a mild punishment might have guarded against.—Let it be a rule with you, that you expect good conduct and obedience, and insist upon

the members of your household reporting to you any flagrant wrong done in your absence; but let your own deportment be so, that they see that you govern with moderate firmness, and they will then have no cause for hiding the delinquency of your child from your knowledge. You will in this manner have a chance of having a constant watch over your child's conduct, which is a great point gained; and he will be afraid to offend, for he can find no means of escaping detection, and knows that he will be punished if he transgresses. It is with children as with grown men: it is not so much the degree as the certainty of punishment which deters them from transgressing; and a judicious parent will let no opportunity pass to prove, by a firmness that will not yield where punishment should be inflicted, that he means to be obeyed. If a child now is kept under constant control, without feeling often the means that make him so, he will become habituated to obedience, and a moral, religious course of conduct; he will learn to love virtue and holiness; and as he grows up he will have these sentiments engrafted in his spirit, and it is highly probable that, strengthened by heavenly grace, which is never denied to the pure in mind, he will be kept upright in the way he should go.

Another requisite to a proper training is, that both parents should coincide in the government of the household. If the one deems it necessary to punish, let the other not interfere, especially in the presence of the child. It is a positive encouragement for misconduct, if he sees that he is screened, when he has transgressed; he will learn to despise the authority of the one that indulges him, and to hate the one that

punishes; both thereby lose their authority; and if in later years the father, for instance, should be gathered to his native earth, the indulgent mother will have ample cause to repent that she was the means of teaching by her weakness lessons of insubordination and disobedience to a child, who now laughs at her commands, and treats with scorn the entreaties of his remaining parent in her declining years. No, parents! be united, support each other in doing your duty by your child; if the father frowns, let not the mother fondle; if the mother punishes, let not the father extend protection. But be it your study to act in the fear of God, and teach your child by your mutual attachment, from which he sees no deviation, to love you equally, to fear you equally; that he may be stimulated to honour you both alike as the law requires; and that, growing up in obedience to the religion of our fathers, he may indeed merit the blessing of a long life on the earth, to your satisfaction and the well-being of all his associates, and become a child of immortal glory through a love of God and the fear of his word, which are the beginning of all wisdom.

May the name of the Lord be blessed from now and unto all eternity. Amen.

Kislev 2d. } 5601.
Nov. 27th. }

DISCOURSE XVIII.

IGIOUS EDUCATION.

No. III.

O God of everlasting! we approach Thee to crave thy blessing and the grant of thy protection from the many evils to which we are exposed. Give us fortitude to submit to thy visitation, and strengthen us with thy undeserved grace, that we may remain firm in obedience, when the allurements of sin would withdraw us from the path of life. And as Thou ever hearest the prayer of the humble and penitent: permit our words to come before Thee, and despise not the outpourings of the heart of the outcasts of Israel in the regions distant from their heritage where Thou dost cause them to dwell. But do Thou according to their request, and give them an understanding mind to comprehend the words of thy law, and remove all obstacles which may oppose their obeying in truth the precepts which Thou hast ordained. And O! give firmness to those of thy children who are assailed by flattery, and the corrupting influence of their enemies, to resist the direful temptations, and to remain steadfast in the pursuance of thy holy will: so that the machinations of those who wish to blot out Israel's name from among the nations may be turned to naught, and they be covered with shame and confusion, even as was Senacherib, who dared to blaspheme thy holy name, and as were the Philis-

tines, who relied upon the strength of their champion against the armies of the living God.—May this be thy will. Amen!

Brethren!

It is a solemn duty enjoined on you in the Scriptures to use every effort within your reach to render your children fit servants of the Lord of heaven and earth, and to imbue their minds with such sentiments as will make them love their duties, and enable them to have a proper firmness to resist doing wrong whenever temptation and opportunity may present themselves. For as your children advance in life, and are gradually withdrawn from your care and observation, they will be exposed to influences which will greatly tend to remove entirely all your early lessons, unless you have implanted in them the root of all the principles according to which you act yourselves, and desire them to act. Your duty therefore is not completed, if you merely tell your children once what you expect of them to do, and you ought not to be satisfied, if they are well-behaved and decorous in your presence; but you should furnish them with such sentiments as will stand by them instead of parental superintendence and care, which should act as a check upon them, when they are alone or far removed from those whom they have to fear or whom they love. Mere morality will not effect this, by which I mean, that lessons of virtue stripped of the consideration of duty to a higher Being, and merely based upon ideas of expediency and prudential considerations, may engender a cautious, kind, and apparently benevolent character, but will not confer that degree of firmness,

which could induce us to resist the impulse for wrong of which we have been speaking. For what is your system of morality, so called, based on? We answer, Expediency only! Now it is all well whilst correct conduct and this selfish principle point out the same road, for then the mere moralist will without doubt do what all must acknowledge to be right, but let the case be different; let us imagine a situation where we are drawn to an attractive transgression by a strong appeal to our senses, where those we fear are far away, where those whom we would on no account grieve by our actions are not likely to become cognizant of our sinning: and then tell me, where our constancy, our resistance would be? Where is the sentiment to restrain us? Tell me not of the dignity of human nature, of the sublime attributes of the human soul; for the man of the world who has no other check than morality, will have ample means, because he has a wide range of permitted actions, to hide from others any thing which they might call unworthy and undignified, at least he will endeavour to preserve the gilded exterior, till his real sentiments and character are at length accidentally laid bare. Moreover the sublime attributes of our soul, such as social love, the feeling of honour and of benevolence, are only too well calculated to lull the spirit into security whenever self is brought into competition with the rights of others; for then we are apt to disregard the love for our fellow, because we may thereby be exposed to injury or inconvenience; feelings of honour may prompt us to revenge, because we may think our honour wounded or our dignity outraged. And lastly, the so-called sentiment of benevolence may by

some strange fatuity, for instance, that true charity begins at home, move us to protect ourselves before we take a view of the wants of others, although if we were to reflect with candour we would find that we have enough for others as well as for ourselves. We therefore say, that morality, in itself, is not the guide which we ought to place before and recommend to our children in their commencement of life, and point it out as the check which is to assist them in the restraining of the desires and passions.

"What guide, then, would you recommend?" Need I tell you, beloved brethren, the name of this blessed principle? know you it not without the words of a public teacher? Surely the heart of Israelites recognizes full well the heavenly gift which has sustained them when their spirit was drooping, when their foot was weary amid the many pilgrimages which they had to encounter, since the first hour they heard the voice of the Everlasting Father speaking to them from the midst of the fire, on that day when the unity of the Lord and his will were made known from the thick clouds of glory that enveloped the summit of the chosen mountain of Sinai!—The terrific fire of the promulgation of the Decalogue did not blaze long; the wonderful sounds soon died away in the deep stillness which followed; the pageant of millions assembled in attentive silence was speedily dissolved: and yet the words then announced have stood as the bulwark of our people against foreign tyranny and domestic disunion, against outward oppression and the defection of the faithless in our own household; and we have remained as a body faithful to our trust, though our Father's warnings are no longer audibly

announced as in days of yore through the mouth of his servants. This then, brethren, is the principle which you should recommend to your children; this is the guide you should set before them.—If now you have the happiness to succeed in rearing them up faithful followers of this law; if you witness in them an adoption of the duties it enjoins, and of the doctrines on which it is founded: you need not tremble for their future welfare, for it is then founded upon a basis which will probably remain unshaken during their whole lives. For where the law of God purifies the thoughts, where its statutes direct the hand in man's work, can we entertain a doubt that a common benefit will result from a mind so trained, from actions so prompted? We say "a common benefit;" for it is not here as with the expediency of the mere moralist, where the agent looks to his own interest, provided it comes not in direct conflict with that of others; since the Israelite, who deserves the name, will forego his own interest in every point where the law asks it of him; he will assist his enemy,* though he have no hope of conciliating him; he will restrain revenge,† though the offender be in his power; and he will assist‡ with his wealth and his services the needy and indigent, though the release-year be near at hand, and he can thus have no farther claim upon their repaying him the amount of their indebtedness. But it is not the effect of the law upon others we wish now to discuss, although it is a fruitful theme which might well inspire the most eloquent with noble thoughts, and afford him a fine field to descant upon

* Exodus xxiii. 4, 5. † Leviticus xix. 18. ‡ Deut. xv. 9.

the mercy of the Most High in so watching over the welfare of his creatures as to bestow it on them for their social guidance; we will to-day regard it only in its workings upon the individuals themselves subject to its rule, and trace the progress by which it renders them the children of salvation under the law. For our text we will take the following passage:

ושמתם את דברי אלה על לבבכם ועל נפשכם וקשרתם אתם לאות על ידכם והיו לטוטפת בין עיניכם: ולמדתם אתם את בניכם לדבר בם בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך: וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך: דברים יא' יח'-כ':

"Therefore, shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul; and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them to your children, to speak of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." Deut. xi. 18–20.

The Scriptures, you will observe, connect personal piety with the education of children; or in other words, they demand of the parents example no less than precept. In the verses preceding our text is contained a denunciation of punishment for disobedience and defection; and as the reverse, or the means to avoid punishment, you are told, "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul." To avoid sinning and its necessary visitation you should be perfectly alive to religious obligation, your body (the heart) and your spirit (the soul) should

equally be devoted to the service of the Most High; and every feeling which prompts you to satisfy the cravings of nature, every thought which dwells upon the vastness of the Creator's works, which reflects upon your own being and your destiny in the light of Israelites and of men, should all be alike in consonance with his wishes and his behests as contained in his revealed word which He made known to our fathers. The heads of the household should exhibit no levity in speaking of the commandments, no disregard to the observance of the divine ordinances, no doubting of the truths and doctrines of the Bible; and in doing any act, they should be careful, that it be entirely in accordance with the letter and spirit of the law. The house should be surrounded with evidences of the inmates being Israelites; every thing should be regulated according to the principles of your ancestors; the food, the drink, the manner of speaking should all be different from gentile custom, and no hesitation should be shown, because such conduct would render you objects of curiosity and inquiry to those who are strangers to our people. "Lay these my words upon your heart," you are told; it is no matter what others think of you, you must not be afraid of the surprise which might be expressed in discovering you in your own peculiar Israelitish rites. But, "Ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand," —bind the memorial of the law literally on your hand; place it there at least during your morning worship, to remind you of your obligation to the Lord for his manifold blessings, in calling your early fathers to his service, in redeeming you from Egyptian bondage, in giving you his laws, and in preserv-

ing you to stand before Him despite of the thousands of calamities which have befallen you. Place it on your forehead, ornament yourselves with the crown of the law, to confess that you subject your feelings and your thoughts to divine rule, and to acknowledge that the Lord's are the power and the government to do in all the worlds according to his almighty will; and by this means you will obtain firmness and strength to be bold and unflinching when temptation would lure you away to follow other gods and bow down to them. And not only for the days of Moses was this said, when gross idolatry was the prevailing sin of all the world, but also for the present hour; for if we do not actually worship stocks and stones, and bow down to a god who cannot save, we nevertheless have within us unhallowed passions and unclean desires, and we worship the love for gold, the inclination for unlawful pleasures, the demon of ambition, and the lust for places incompatible with religion, which are all equally unable to raise the soul above the mortality of this life into the presence of our Maker, and are all alike false idols to which our everlasting happiness is so often sacrificed. The institutions therefore which were wise in the days of Moses, which were then calculated to rivet closer the bonds of the law and the love of God, are so yet at this very day; practise them therefore before your children, and show them how they are to obey the the commands which you lay before them. If you do this in all truth and in entire simpleness of faith, you can then proceed to the next duty, "And you shall teach them to your children." It is not enough that you tell them where they may find the word of

God, and it is not doing your duty, to let them put upon it their own interpretation; but you yourselves, fathers and mothers, should instruct them in the words of life and interpret the text for them in the manner it is accepted among Israel. Two duties proceed out of this consideration: *First*, it is the business of parents to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with at least the five books of Moses, the law proper, and omit no occasion to teach the duties thereof to their children; not that their studies should be confined to this part of the Bible only, but that the poorest persons, or those who have to toil daily for their bread, should endeavour to become at all events familiar with this, that they might have it in their power to become proper instructors of their offspring; although we can hardly imagine a family so constantly occupied, that they could not read with care the whole record of revelation, and occasionally those good works which have been written by pious Israelites, in order to become themselves more firm in faith, and to render the instruction more agreeable and varied to their juniors.—*Secondly*, they are bound to search for pious and intelligent teachers, to whom alone they should intrust the education of their children. For it is not to be denied, that it is a bad system to send sons and daughters of Israel at an early age to schools where either no religion at all, or one of an opposite character to our own, is taught. In the first case the love of revelation is not encouraged; in the other, feelings are called into action and a species of conviction of non-admitted and inadmissible doctrines is produced, which will materially affect the due observance of our religious rites. It were indeed advisable, that chil-

dren should know very little, at all events not more than is unavoidable, of the existence of a difference of religion; since by this method a deepseated adherence to the early lessons of piety is impressed on the mind, before the doubts which are consequent upon a view of the multifarious shades of belief are elicited: and parents thus give such a strength to the principles which they practise in their families, that the ready imitation of the same by the children is more easily attained.—It will not do to assert, that in general schools children are taught nothing bad; for, brethren! you are not to be content with a mere negative education; there is nothing negative in virtue, all at length depends upon the performance of certain acts, whether they be ceremonial or social duties, without which civil security itself cannot be obtained; for this too requires action for its firm establishment. We say therefore that religious tuition should be a part of the daily exercises in school; Bible reading and Bible explanations are a necessary branch of a Jewish education: and hence, where practicable, Jewish teachers, if not alone, at all events jointly, ought to have the superintendence of our youths.

Some may perhaps suppose that much time must be lost to the acquisition of sciences and general knowledge by so much care being bestowed upon religion, which they justly say rests but upon a few easily understood principles. But there is a great error in both these assertions. First, it is not true, that the time bestowed on the Bible and its elucidation is lost or misspent. We will admit for argument's sake, that by this study the hours to be devoted to grammar, history and other sciences should have to be di-

minished: still can this not be called a loss. For let us ask, What do you want to teach by sciences? certainly nothing more, than to give to the young correct views of life, and enable them to judge with propriety of things to be hereafter presented to them. So is grammar, to enable them to speak and write with propriety; history, to inform them of the acts of past ages, and to give them examples of good men to be imitated, and wicked ones whose deeds should be abhorred; and so with other things. Now we demand, Is religious knowledge not something which is to become useful to children hereafter? is it not calculated to enable them to judge with propriety of many subjects of the highest importance? If you then call sciences the ornament of life, religion surely is far more, it is the essential element of our existence; and hence it is a science above all to be acquired with diligent study. But it is not true, that the time devoted to such information is lost to the elegant branches. So many collateral matters become necessarily mixed up with a study of Scripture, that an intelligent teacher will find it an excellent vehicle to communicate all the necessary information whilst engaged in this alone; especially if we go according to the good old custom, and teach the Hebrew at once, and read the Bible from the original only, and employ all the aids which modern learning has brought to bear upon the sacred volume. This will at once require and employ the study of grammar, both of the language of Israel and the vernacular of the country; a geographical survey of the different regions mentioned in the Bible; comparative history of the tribes and nations occurring in the narrative; besides

such other matters (for instance, the natural history of the animals, plants, and minerals, whose names occur in the law and prophets, and a survey of the manufactures and manners of the ancients) which will suggest themselves to an enlightened inquirer in religion. In truth, the Bible is a magnificent study for itself; which is evidenced by the many learned and excellent works written to illustrate, and the many great minds who have devoted themselves solely to explain its text, and to clear up the obscurities which have at times presented themselves, because we are not sufficiently familiar with the imagery it exhibits and the customs and characters it portrays. We may assert without fear of contradiction, that there are not many men, if there be indeed one, with sufficient information to explain correctly the books of Scripture, so rich, and magnificent, and inexhaustible are their stores.—Besides this, no study need be neglected on account of religious instruction; there is ample time, if properly economized, for children to become acquainted with every thing for which they have capacity, and which can be useful to them. It is a great folly to suppose that it is advantageous for a child to be an early genius, and to display rare excellence above others of the same age; for in this way indolence and a degree of self-sufficiency are very apt to be produced, which are injurious alike to an advancement in knowledge and an amiable deportment. If therefore religious education should retard the progress in other matters a year or two (if we take different children of equal capacity educated in different systems, that is to say, one with the other without religion as a criterion): still nothing would be lost thereby in the

end; for what the one would gain by a greater leisure for profane subjects, the other would far more than equal by a greater degree of solidity and an enlarged capacity for deeper studies. But even this danger of a delay in advancement is in all probability overrated; for different branches, provided they are not too numerous and difficult, rather assist each other, and are a sort of relief for the student; and I can see no reason why religion viewed as a study should differ from any other, since it is no doubt true, that to the young the subject presents itself by no means in the unattractive light it often does to adults, because it demands of these to restrain passions and desires which the former have never yet felt.

With regard to the objection we supposed as made against the necessity of teaching religion, because it rests upon a few easily understood principles: we will state, that the Jewish faith is in truth founded upon the great self-evident principle of the existence of God, secondly upon the existence of a revelation from God, and thirdly upon the existence of rewards and punishments, inasmuch as the other doctrines which we profess are derived from one or the other of these cardinal points. Nevertheless, we maintain that it is of the highest importance that children should learn these principles from believing persons, and that great care should be taken that no false or inaccurate doctrines should be added to or substituted for them. We all know, or ought to know, that our mind is so constituted that it will imbibe every thing presented to it, especially in youth; and the grossest errors, as now viewed, have been at one time or another the prevailing sentiments of mankind. Even

in our own day, are we not constantly startled by the profession of creeds which we Israelites cannot in any way acknowledge? And their existence, as generally admitted truths, can only be accounted for on the ground that early education has rendered them acceptable to those holding them; for we have no right to doubt upon vague surmises the sincerity of any of our fellow-beings, and we must therefore suppose that persons holding doctrines, say the opposite of ours, may be perfectly sincere in believing them, no less than we ourselves are in maintaining our own pure faith. It is, as we have said, the constant hearing of such matters in youth, and having nothing offered that runs contrary to them, which render them so convincing to their professors, that they acquiesce in them as though they were well-ascertained truths. If now Jewish children are exposed to the same influence with those of our gentile neighbours, I ask, What can you expect, but that they too should become tainted with the leaven of erroneous belief, and be made converts to one or more doctrines which we cannot admit as true? Say you, that it matters not what young children think of controverted theology, and that, when they grow up, it is time enough to teach them our doctrines? But this is again a fatal error. We know from experience how difficult it is to convince a gentile of the erroneousness of his belief, whilst we cannot comprehend how it is possible for him to hesitate yielding himself to the conviction which the Scriptures offer. Hence arises our hesitation in admitting persons not born Israelites to our communion; because we must have strong suspicion of their having that conviction which is necessary

for the adoption of our religion, till we have no longer any motive to doubt their professed sincerity.—If now you leave a Jewish child to the same influence which warps the gentile's mind, you in fact teach him gentile doctrines; and you will be, and deserve to be, sorely grieved if with advancing years you find it difficult to make him adopt the doctrines which you yourselves profess. His mind has been rendered unjewish; he has to unlearn what he may have considered true hitherto; and one of two things can occur, he either may adhere to his early-imbibed notions, or become an infidel, rejecting what he once learnt, and what you now wish to teach him. If you can even succeed in convincing him of our holy law, and induce him to adopt it as true: still there may remain lurking some ideas which are not orthodox, and which may impart a shadow and colouring to his religious conduct, which cannot be defended upon pure biblical grounds.—Believe me one thing, simple as is our religion in its foundation, it must be early infused, that is the precise word, into the mind to become united with, and inseparable from the soul. *There should be no necessity for converting our own children*, they ought to be Jews in every stage of their being. As soon therefore as they begin to learn, the unity of God should be held up to their adoption, not so much by argument to prove its being so, as by simple information. The proofs of the existence of the Deity are so universal, that you can easily lead the youngest even to comprehend that every thing was made by a superior Power; and the uniformity of design in every creature will elucidate the universality of this Power; and the harmony in the whole chain of ex-

istence, the regularity of the movements of all the beings which we can observe, and the use one thing is to another prove that this superior, universal Power is also ONE and UNIFORM. Yet even this simple doctrine will require a length of time to become perfectly familiar, readily as it impresses itself with immovable conviction upon the minds of educated Israelites.—Let us next view the second cardinal article of our creed: "There is a revelation from this superior, universal, one and uniform Power." Again let this be taught without much argument, which, let me remark, will naturally have but little weight with children; for they will sooner take your simple assertion, when they once have confidence in you, than listen to reasoning which is perhaps beyond their comprehension. So then tell them, that the Lord God, or the ONE as we called Him, made himself audibly manifest to our ancestors and other great men of former times, and communicated to them the duties they should observe, and those acts which they should carefully avoid. And as therefore we thus know what is right, which is also our duty to do, and what is wrong, which is what we should avoid: we will be held responsible for our actions, which we do when we are not under restraint or impelled by unavoidable necessity. This at once will open up for you an opportunity to descant on reward and punishment; and you can tell your charges, how the Lord made man a compound of soul and body, and that, though the latter is destroyed by death, the former will yet survive, and receive then such reward for past conduct, as He, the Lord, may deem just and proper.—We concede that these principles follow so

clearly from each other, that a reasoning person will readily admit them as true; but again we say, it takes time to impress them sufficiently upon the understanding of the young; and once telling them, will not suffice to prevent the growth of error from other causes. Besides this, as soon as you teach the child that there is a revelation, it is natural that he should ask to be informed, what this revelation is: will you then dismiss him with a mere reference to the Bible, and tell him to "Go and read?" Suppose you were to pursue such a system with the study of grammar, do you really think that any progress would be made in it? And yet you assert, that religion of all sciences requires no teaching, and that it is time misspent to inculcate it!—No, brethren! our holy faith is simple and pure; but it demands actions as well as belief, and these actions are a proper study for youths, and the Bible is a book which merits and should receive a thorough reading and a sound interpretation in all our schools. It is the word of salvation, it is the word of truth, it is the will of the God of truth, who desires thereby to render us fit for everlasting happiness. And, therefore, we demand, that it be the first study both as to time and duration, which you should present to your children, that they may become early familiar with its principles and their duties, and have a long season to apply these to life, and regulate it by the doctrines which you offer for their acceptance. In the same manner you are bound to prevent their becoming familiar with the doctrines which we call erroneous, and against which the Scriptures warn us as injurious and calculated to make us forget our religious duties. Hence it arises, that it is

exceedingly sinful to send children entirely among gentiles, to eat and drink with them, and to become thoroughly imbued with their doctrines; since this course is certainly the most injurious to forming a Jewish character. And as parents have not always the leisure or information to become their spiritual guides, it evidently becomes the duty of all true Israelites to send their children to Jewish teachers, who have the fear of God before their eyes, and who execute the sacred trust of rearing the young in the way they should go, in a manner best calculated to effect this most desirable object. These should be aided by the parents in maintaining a wholesome, though mild discipline over the children, and they should omit no opportunity to make religion better understood, more loved, and more sincerely followed, than unfortunately it has been in many places in our own days.

Believe me one thing, brethren! that the falling off, which we all have to deplore in religious observances, is the offspring of ignorance and want of education. In former years there prevailed an error of teaching abstruse points of legal knowledge, to the exclusion, to a great extent, of pure scriptural knowledge. Sciences were then inaccessible to our oppressed people, and hence many wasted their powerful intellect, which being repressed was nevertheless not extinguished, in detecting points of difference and matters of disputation in the law, which now have but little value in the changed aspect of things which of late years has taken place. Nevertheless there was then a great devotion to religion, and the strictest observance of even the minutest things was the crowning glory of those days. But when the access

to sciences was opened to us, a new spirit was suddenly called into action. Scripture was more sought after, and the ancient disputations and comments were greatly neglected, much more so indeed than they should have been; for with all their faults they contain matters of profound wisdom and deep reflection.—Yet even this modified study of our religion has not in many places maintained its ground, and has there, alas! receded to a point of perfect inattention to so holy a pursuit. In several towns there is not even a single school where the Scriptures are expounded and the holy language of our ancestors is taught; so that some, judging from appearance and a fancied necessity, have thought it expedient to advise to banish the latter as useless from our form of worship. And now we see the effects of this deterioration, in the ignorance, unpardonable ignorance, of many in the essential points of their religion; in their unacquaintance with the Hebrew tongue; in their omission of the observance demanded of them, and in the neglect, I almost might say exclusion from their society, of the teachers of our blessed faith. It is true that there are but few places where there is not a minister appointed to do the necessary offices of religion, and what is more, public worship is generally well supported, if even the number of attendants is not very large; but I speak of a class of teachers of religion, not merely public servants, who should have the formation of the mind of our children specially delegated to them, and give instruction in the doctrines and principles of the law which has descended to us from our ancestors. And it is such as these who are not cared for, nor wanted! whilst parents

themselves are too busy to be themselves the teachers of their children! It is a crying evil, a sin of no small magnitude.—A man would be stigmatized as illiberal and unenlightened who would refuse sending his child to any school, and merely give him an occasional lesson at home in the rudiments of reading and writing; and in truth he would be guilty of a great wrong, by leaving him behind in the march of improvement. And so well is this subject generally admitted, that but few indeed can be found who give not some schooling to their children, and many spend large and liberal sums to teach them whatever is ornamental and useful, and not unfrequently give extravagant prices for mere useless accomplishments, that they may not be a whit behind the spirit of the age. And yet these very parents find it impossible to pay for the religious education of their children, as though every thing should be taught but the word of the Lord! Is it then surprising that we are retrograding in religious knowledge? that the gentiles who formerly could only learn from us are generally better acquainted with Scriptures than we are? They, we will state it to their credit, are respectful to their public teachers, they endeavour to seek for information in various ways from them, and listen to their reproof with becoming deference. This was formerly the case with us, when the schools of our teachers were filled with listeners, when they might reprove and admonish, and the community would obey their instruction. Perhaps you may say, that in those times there was too much power in the hands of these men: admitted; but what can you say in defence of a state of things where the opposite fault is so prevalent, as

not to admit of any concealment from the eyes of our opponents? Let us be candid: the evil has reached an alarming height, and it is high time that a remedy were applied. As it is however now among us, the difficulties in the way of a thorough change are truly great and appalling; for whilst there are not more union and harmony to effect a general good, and whilst the uninformed obtrude their ideas of reformation, or whilst the unworthy and irreligious assume the place of teachers, nothing can be done. But the change must commence with the individual members of Israel themselves. They must learn, in the *first* place, to disregard the opinions of those who differ from us in their rule of faith; *secondly*, they should admit no one to teach who is not qualified by education and a thorough moral and religious conduct for the task he assumes; *thirdly*, whenever a teacher is appointed he should receive the countenance of all the community where he lives, and whilst he is in the discharge of the duties for which he has been appointed, let him not be unduly interfered with or checked by the temporal rulers of the Synagogue; *fourthly*, let no one attempt to imitate the example of the vain-glorious who speak of reforming our worship, or, in other words, of forcing their own crude notions upon us instead of those opinions we have always cherished; and *lastly*, if no competent teachers can be obtained at the present moment, let such inducements be held out that youths, whom the Lord has endowed with wisdom, will seek to qualify themselves for teachers in our academies, and to become lecturers and preachers of the Word in our Synagogues. But it need not be expected that success can attend

the production of sound capable teachers, whilst we are ruled, as in many countries, by the direct interference of the gentiles, or, as in others, by our yielding constantly to what is termed public opinion in withholding our children from proper Jewish schools; whilst incompetent or unworthy persons are elevated to the same responsible rank of instructors; whilst our teachers, when appointed, receive not the countenance, respect, and support of the community, and whilst their energies are cramped by the interference of the ignorant and ungodly, who decry their honest efforts, and strive to bring confusion in our midst by the introduction of pretended reforms.—The plan just hinted at may not be attainable in a few years; there are doubtless some difficulties in the way; but still impracticable it is not. We have gone astray from our former devotion to the law; why should it be impossible to bring us back?—You may perhaps say, that there are no such persons among us who are fit to follow out the details! This is only true in part. The whole plan can only be carried out into practice by slow degrees, particularly that of freeing ourselves from gentile influence; but still there are many, wherever Israelites dwell, who can do a great deal to forward the blessed work. Let the attempt be made by a united effort, and some success will at once attend it. And have we not seen in this very place an initiatory* course of instruction imparted for several

* The Hebrew Sunday-School. The writer had also just before this period carried on a day school for two years and a half, and gave it up finally when he found that the public did not then sympathize with the project. Still it culminated about twelve years afterward in the Hebrew Education Society's School.

years past with a success which many at one time despaired of? And why should not a general Jewish education succeed just as well, if the same spirit were displayed which forwarded the pious plan just mentioned? And of one thing be assured, that as soon as there is a demand for teachers, they will be forthcoming; for the time never yet was that the law of our God had not its devoted followers, who meditated therein day and night, and from whose lips flowed wisdom and instruction.

My advice is, therefore, brethren! that schools for general education under Jewish superintendence should be established forthwith in every place where they are not, and be reformed and put upon a permanent footing where they are already in existence. The sciences can well be blended with the study of religion; and do not imagine that the teaching of the former will be hurtful to the latter, or that the careful study of the Bible and commentators will retard the progress in science. They, who tell you the opposite, are either not acquainted with general knowledge or ignorant of the language and tendency of Scripture; or they confound what is unessential or merely an abuse with the fundamental doctrines and duties which have been handed down to us.—It is not enough to let your children have an occasional and hurried glimpse at God's word, and then to leave them to draw their own conclusion; it is not enough that they have once in a while a lesson in Hebrew or religious books; but they should be constantly under such guidance that they may daily learn more familiarly our own national speech, and drink in, literally, the proper understanding of the words of the living

God. For then will piety entwine itself with their soul, and will become a part of their very nature. It will then not be necessary for you to threaten punishment for disobedience to their duties; for they will practise cheerfully what their intelligent teacher impresses on their mind, provided you do not counteract at home, by injudicious levity on sacred subjects, a direct contradiction of what is taught at school, or an exhibition of irreligious conduct, the impression which is produced by him whom you have chosen as their moral guide.—If you have capacity, introduce frequently religious conversation; explain a portion of the history of the Scriptures, expatiate on the beauty of a commandment; have the Bible read, and whenever the Hebrew is taught, let the children frequently render for you some passage into the vernacular language. For there is nothing so effectual in filling the mind with willing obedience, as a thorough understanding of our duties; and whence could we obtain this in greater perfection than from the words of the Bible themselves? And thus also says our text: "And ye shall teach them to your children, to speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." In the first place permit the children to obtain correct information by such agents and means as have been pointed out to you. Then let your conversation revert to the same when you are at home in the bosom of your family; let prayers and devotional exercises be a portion of your domestic economy; thank the Creator for the gifts of life, the food and the law, for bodily and spiritual blessings which have been bestowed on you; let them

see that you are willing to acknowledge your dependence on the Lord, and anxious to derive information from his word, and they will be stimulated to acquire likewise a holy feeling, and to grow in grace and piety. When you are abroad with them, draw their attention to the beauty of the objects which everywhere present themselves, and tell them that the whole is the work of the One great universal Power whom you worship. Tell them also of the goodness He manifested in changing for a time the course of nature to effect the redemption of Israel from bondage, and in the announcement of the law from Sinai. When the time for repose draws near, let them pray and repeat the confession of our faith, and do yourselves participate in their devotion. Let the same be the case in the morning, when you and they are awakened to a renewal of God's favour by being again permitted to enjoy his blessings for another day. In this manner will religion become natural to them, and will be the ruling principle of all their actions, at least you have according to the law laid the best foundation for a virtuous and happy life. —In making religion, however, the rule and conversation of the household, you are not told to exclude rational converse on other subjects; but merely to let the concerns of the immortal spirit have a portion of your thoughts and speech, no less than the affairs of a merely physical kind. Nor is innocent recreation to be excluded; on the contrary, religion should impart cheerfulness, and play and amusement in moderation are by no means incompatible with it.

In short, hold yourselves in this as well as in other matters close to scriptural instruction, and you can-

not go astray; and the wise king of Israel, in enforcing a strict observance of the law, told us also there is a time for all things. Do this, brethren and friends! in the spirit of true piety, and do not devote all your leisure to amusement, but spend occasionally an hour for the moral progress of your offspring. The task may at first be rather awkward for you; but practice will render you more ready, and in a little while you will become excellent instructors, and you will be rewarded by the greater docility and more prompt obedience of your children; and know that by no means whatever can you fit them better to become favourites of God and beloved of man, than by rendering them faithful Israelites and strict adherents of the law of Moses.—If thus you constitute your fireside a school of piety, and your home the sanctuary of religion: well may then the name of the Almighty inscribed on the Mezuzah appear on the door-posts of your house and of your gates, as indicative that there dwell they who in this remote generation, and in this land so far distant from Palestine, forget not the ancestral custom, uphold the ancestral law, and look forward to a return unto the now waste hills of the once lovely land, under the guidance of the son of David, whom the Lord will send to spread over the whole earth peace, freedom, piety, and devotion to the Almighty's will, even as He has ordained in the law which He of old proclaimed from the mountain of Horeb to the adoring children of his servants, whom He had redeemed from bondage to be his people for ever.

O God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob! display

thy wondrous power over us, and incline our heart to follow thy commandments; and support us in our endeavours to obey Thee, and let not the confusion, and anxiety, and cares of life lead us astray from the righteous path. Preserve us by thy grace, so that all the nations of the earth may see that thy name is called over us, and fear to injure us, thy heritage. Amen.

Kislev 16th. } 5601.
Decem. 11th. }

NOTE.—The foregoing three lectures on "Religious Education" by no means present this important matter in so complete a light as I might wish; but I thought it best to close the subject with the third lecture, for which reason it is unduly long, more like an essay than a sermon; yet I promise myself, if the views here offered meet with favour, to enlarge upon them at a future day.

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT

THE SYNAGOGUE MIKVEH ISRAEL,

IN BEHALF OF THE

FEMALE HEBREW BENEVOLENT SOCIETY,

OF PHILADELPHIA,

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1837—HESHVAN 14, 5598.

PRAYER.

O LORD of heaven and earth! whom neither the heights of heaven nor the depths of the abyss can contain, who art without beginning and without ending, we come before Thee to invoke thy blessing upon our endeavours to serve Thee, and on our striving to fulfil the behests of thy will. Strengthen our resolve that we may resist temptation, and guide our steps that we be not lured away upon the destructive road of sin. Cause good to result from our charity, and bless every trifle given in thy name, that it may bear fruit a thousand-fold, and suffice for the needy that they may never more require the assistance of flesh and blood. Grant prosperity to the labour of each individual, that every man may receive his support immediately from thy liberal hand. Bestow thy blessing upon this land and its inhabitants amongst

the lands that are blessed of Thee, and fill the fields with abundant increase, and the granaries with corn, so that the small means of the poor may be enough for their support. Above all teach us humility; so that if blessed with prosperity we may not wax proud and incur thy wrath by a neglect of thy holy precepts; and that if punished we may bend our head in meek submission to thy just decrees.—Let it be farther thy will to grant that our prayer may ascend into thy presence, and speedily light up the lamp of the son of Jessé thy servant, and let all the world see thy glory, when Thou returnest to Zion the chosen dwelling of thy name, there to let thy presence abide among us for ever. Pour also the spirit of thy wisdom over us and all the children of thy creation; so that all may devote their hearts to serve Thee who alone art God and King. Amen.

ADDRESS.

MOTIVES OF CHARITY.

Friends and Israelites!

The benevolent daughters of our people composing the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society of Philadelphia have deputed me again to lay before you a brief account of their stewardship of the funds intrusted to their care. And well it was that your liberality gave them more extended means in the year that has just elapsed and been mixed up with the resistless

tide of eternity with the years that have been and are passed away for ever. For, sorrow, poverty and anguish have not been absent, and every day almost some hapless stranger, some lone woman, has presented claims which could not be overlooked, and which have been supplied as far as the funds of our sisters have allowed and as actual necessity required. Yes, persons to whom the tongue of this land is unknown have resorted hither in search of a happier home than their own native land afforded, and when they had arrived found themselves overwhelmed by dire and oppressive want. What now would have been their situation if not some kind helping hand, under Providence, had stepped forward to supply the couch for sickness, the fireside for refreshing heat, the bread for the infants, and the shelter of the friendly roof for the aged and infirm? Acts of this nature have been accomplished in the last year, by the judicious application of the small means, small for so extensive a use, placed at the disposal of the society; and thus blessings have been scattered, joys diffused, and sorrows lightened; and the friendless stranger, friendless as she thought herself far from her native soil, has found friends and protectors in the kind daughters of Israel who, true to the characteristics of their race, are retiringly unostentatious, merciful in their sympathies to the sufferings of their fellow-mortals, and kindly intent upon bestowing the fruits of beneficence to all who need. It is not as the eulogist of the society and their doings that I say this, but merely because last year I was called upon to appeal to your generosity in support of their treasury, which appeal was so liberally answered, that it ap-

pears to be obligatory upon me to state briefly that the funds collected have been so applied as the donors had a right to expect, and thereby to foster the virtuous resolution of again enabling our sisters to keep up to its full measure the system of charity upon which they have been hitherto acting. And truly there is need of this bounty! For the transactions of this and other charitable institutions, here as well as in neighbouring cities, amply prove, that with increased means the annual surplus has not increased in equal proportions; for the poor of other countries, chiefly from the over-populated districts of Europe, annually crowd hither in increased numbers to obtain under the protection of equal laws and the untrammelled exercise of their industry a more extended reward for their labours, than can be procured in their native lands. Naturally enough, among the many of small means, persons in the pinching state of indigence may be induced to sacrifice their little, their all, in order to reach this land, perhaps this very city; and no sooner are they here, than they feel that even in this land a person must have, to use the language of the people, a start in life; or perhaps sickness or other afflictions may at once arrest their labouring hand upon their first coming hither. Shall people like these be compelled to hold out their hands to ask for alms from strangers to their faith? shall they be compelled to resort to the poor-house, that refuge for the vicious and improvident no less than the honest poor? or shall they be left in want of every thing at times perhaps when the female has to bear the pangs of maternity, or when the aged sire is unable to raise his drooping head, sinking fast into the grave

of his forefathers, from his bed of sickness? Or shall they be told to toil away, like the cruel Pharaoh said to our oppressed ancestors: "Go ye now and toil, and straw shall not be given you?" Shall they be left in such distress that the fear of starvation must compel them to transgress the law of our Maker and Redeemer? Surely this cannot be, this is not the wish of one of you, my honoured hearers! and I am not far wrong in maintaining that many, if not all, would divide their last loaf in order to obviate such extreme cases of hardship. But such a demand is not made. God has helped us; we have means, we have more than we absolutely need for ourselves; and even if the last year has deprived us of a part of our wealth, still enough has been left to compel us to confess in honest truth that, though less wealthy, we have yet means sufficient to assist, even if it be with a mere trifle, those less favoured than ourselves. Let us give this trifle, let us bestow it this day on the ladies' society, the members of which are our security that the amount collected will be distributed so as to be made subservient to promote the greatest amount of good consistent with their rules, and we may be assured that, no matter to whom given, great benefit will be the result; for experience has taught us, that the recipients of relief from our various benevolent associations have often, I may almost say, generally, been enabled ultimately to obtain a livelihood by their own industry, perhaps through the very charity originally bestowed by these blessed treasuries, yes, thrice blessed treasuries of the Lord! and when they had obtained a moderate competency many have reimbursed the amount re-

ceived, and joined themselves in turn to us in order to propagate the good work themselves, and to be bestowers in place of receivers of benevolence. And herein lies the chief characteristic difference between the charity of an individual and a society. If an individual gives, it is almost universally an absolute gift, and the receiver is placed under obligation to the donor for as much as is given, and even if he should prosper in life, he can hardly insult his benefactor by offering him back the small amount received; and consequently a species of superiority on the one, and dependence on the other hand is thus maintained, extremely injurious at times to the existence of friendship between persons who might otherwise have been friends. But if a society is the almoner, no feeling of dependence on individuals is engendered; the idea of an irredeemable obligation can find no place in the mind of the poor, and if he is afterwards blessed, and sees that he can now return what was given him in the hour of his need, there is a ready opportunity of his doing so, for the treasury of the association will always gladly receive back what it dispensed; and therefore, although the debt of gratitude is not cancelled, still it presses not down the individual independence, which, if properly fostered, is the basis of every honourable character. I need not cite instances where charity thus given was returned; nor if even this did not take place, where the bounty once bestowed produced a permanent relief; for your experience will supply such instances. And surely the idea that with a small gift you may be the means of raising a fellow-being from absolute want to comparative ease and affluence; the idea of

saving by timely assistance a despairing brother from the depth of temptation, crime, and misery, must be enough to induce all of you to give "each according to the blessing of the Lord which He hath given you."

Another advantage resulting from labours of a society is, that charity can be and is given with more discrimination; since the managers of a public institution are bound by every consideration to guard against imposition by persons feigning necessity where none exists; whereas individuals, however anxious to distinguish, can seldom spare the time to make the necessary investigation. It may perhaps be urged, that the certainty almost of obtaining relief may embolden many to lay their situation open and demand relief, who perhaps by their own application and perseverance might have been able to help themselves. This is certainly often the case, and persons have been known who thus in a measure fraudulently obtained assistance; but the number so transgressing against the commandment implied in the annunciation, "By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," bears not any proportion to those who have honestly a claim upon our sympathy, and truly it is better that now and then our managers should bestow largesses where none are properly required, than that the really deserving should suffer from a too cautious distribution. It must at the same time be observed, that a hesitancy in replying to questions when an applicant is examined, does not always demonstrate unworthiness, or a consciousness that direct replies would debar him from relief; on the contrary, it may proceed from a sense of shame, that

he has been brought by reverses to the necessity of asking the aid of man. For there are many who in their own homes have always maintained a character unsullied by aught of reproach, who have perhaps themselves been of those who feed the hungry and clothe the naked. But lo! in the hour of night the wind of Heaven carries up the clouds from the distant ocean, with sulphurous gases the air is filled, mass of vapour piles itself on mass, and with heavy portents rests the atmosphere's weight upon every man's breast. Hark! yonder sound is the roll of the distant thunder! See yon sudden flash! it is the lightning's vivid glare! all nature seems now convulsed, and sound, and fire, and the torrent are commingled, and man hastily forsakes his pillow, terrified at the awful display of his Creator's mighty power! Now the storm is at its height! and the fierce flame seizes hold of man's labour, and soon blazes up in the gloom of the terrific night. Quick in succession the bucket is plied from hand to hand of compassionate neighbours, high in streams issues out the volume sent forth by the aiding engine; but vain is all the toil, useless is the friendly aid, rafter after rafter tumbles into the fiery pool, walls fall in, beams are crushed, and all fly aghast from the threatening ruins! Yet none of those dear to his heart* are lost, and the father leaves his devastated home for a foreign clime, bereft of all the riches he once possessed, and claims peradventure your aid to obtain bread for his helpless little ones. Is he deceiving you, because in a strange land the blush of shame

* Partly borrowed from Schiller's "Lied von der Glocke."

mantles on his cheek, when he hesitatingly recounts the tale of his wo? Is his wife to be blamed, if she is unwilling to let strangers know the full extent of evil which the Lord has in his judgment decreed unto her? For although compassion is raised in the mind of the benevolent by a knowledge of the sufferings of the unfortunate: still the sensitive delicacy of many who are oppressed by poverty shrinks from disclosing the tithe of what they have to endure. Those therefore who really wish to be a blessing to their species, those whom the Lord has endowed with the means to relieve the wo they see, should not wait till the sufferers are knocking at their gates; but should of their own accord seek out the modest unobtrusive indigent whose lips are sealed by shame and delicacy from laying their sufferings open to public gaze. And if they are unwilling to be such agents of beneficence in their own persons; if they like not to enter the abode of wretched indigence and to bestow with their own hands a part of their superfluities; or if age or sickness or unavoidable occupations prevent them from being angels of mercy: let them then give unto those, who, like the ladies of our society here present, will gladly assume the task, and will faithfully and impartially administer relief to all who need, and who require not abject humiliation in order to move their pity, and who never will, never can, because they never should, send a distressed sister unheeded from their doors, since they have voluntarily bound themselves to spread consolation, sustenance and contentment among the needy according to the utmost extent of their disposable means.—It need not be urged upon you, who are at ease and in

affluence, how lovely it is in all to feel for those who are afflicted; for there are but few indeed who have not experienced an emotion of tranquillity and satisfaction with themselves, when they had parted with what made them not poorer, and lighted up the smile of gratitude in the countenance of the persons they benefitted with their charity; and all must have experienced how sweet a reward was the "God bless you" coming from a heart overflowing with gratitude. Yes! charity blesses the giver as much as the receiver; for whilst the one is relieved of a load of care, the other thereby purchases himself a better heart, he conquers the disposition to retain worldly goods which cannot benefit him, and acquires the good-will of his heavenly Father. For what says the prophet (Isaiah lviii. 6–9)?

הלוא זה צום אבחרהו פתח חרצבות רשע התר אגדות מוטה ושלח רצוצים חפשים וכל מוטה תנתקו : הלוא פרס לרעב לחמך ועניים מרודים תביא בית כי תראה ערם וכסיתו ומבשרך לא תתעלם : אז יבקע כשחר אורך וארכתך מהרה תצמח והלך לפניך צדקך כבוד ה' יאספך : אז תקרא וה' יענה תשוע ויאמר הנני : ישעיה נח' ו'-ט' :

"Is not this rather the fast which I choose, to dissolve the bands of wickedness; to loosen the oppressive burdens; and to let the oppressed go free; and that ye should break asunder every yoke? Is it not to distribute thy bread to the hungry? and to bring the miserably afflicted poor into thy house? when thou seest the naked that thou clothe him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth like the morning-dawn; and thy

health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer, thou shalt cry, and He will say, Here I am."

This is the extensive field of universal benevolence in which we are commanded to labour, and the harvest unto ourselves will be ample indeed. For we are promised a boon exceeding by far the value of our own acts; we are told that our light shall spring forth as the morning-dawn; yes, just as to the exhausted mariner upon the sinking wreck is welcome the blessed dawn that shows him the friendly haven: so shall in the gloom of despair the divine light illuminate the path of those acting righteously. And as the same mariner's health and strength are reinvigorated when he finds that safety is within his reach: so will virtuous deeds constantly make us progress onward, when we have escaped shipwreck against the rock of passions. And as the seafarer rejoices when he casts his anchor in the harbour of security, when all perils are overcome: so shall we rejoice when we are received into the embrace of the divine Glory, the permanent resting-place of the righteous. If our conduct deserves this, we may indeed call, and the Lord will answer, and unto the voice of our entreaty He will surely grant us his favour. We thus see that with our small endeavours we can purchase ourselves everlasting joys,—eternal bliss by temporal sacrifices. Let me then again call on you, brothers and sisters, to act up to the demands of our Father! give according to your means! right the injured! assist the oppressed! relieve the indigent! and as God

loves the widow, the orphan, and the stranger, to give them bread and garments: so do you strive to be his agents on earth, bid the stranger welcome, be parents to the orphan, and protectors to the widow! so that when you may call in your need upon the Omnipotent, the Seër of all secrets, He may mete out to you enlargement and deliverance, as your virtue may deserve from his inexhaustible bounty, and from his mercy which never faileth.

Heshvan 5th. } 5598.
Nov'ber 7th. }

FUNERAL ADDRESS,

SPOKEN OVER THE BIER OF

THE REV. ISAAC B. SEIXAS,

AT THE BURIAL-GROUND IN NEW YORK,

ON MONDAY THE 2d OF ELUL (AUGUST 12th), 5599.

Brethren and Friends!

On but one occasion previous to this time have I stood before you, it was when the benevolent guardians of the poor and the orphan sent for me to appeal to you in behalf of their charges. Little did I then dream, that he who on that day stood by my side and administered in this holy house would so soon be called from the field of his labours into the presence of the omnipotent Judge; little did I on that day think that ere three years had passed away, I should be summoned to address you over the bier on which his mortal remains are laid. I almost shrink from the task, and gladly would I have been absent this day, and not taxed my feelings by officiating on this mournful occasion. But it comports not with the duty of a servant of the holy One to withhold his aid, when it is required at the grave of the departed, and it is not for him to hesitate, when his services are demanded. Still I would earnestly have wished that

I had been spared this trial, and that some other one could have been selected to perform the duties which are now demanded of me. For I too must mourn with his bereaved family over the father, the husband, and friend; since, independently of the family connexion subsisting between us, my first associations in this country are connected with our deceased brother. When I had crossed the broad Atlantic Ocean, and had escaped by the almost miraculous interposition of Providence from the fury of the equinoctial storm and the raging of the mountain billows, and when I had recovered from a painful illness after my arrival on these shores, and when I repaired to the house of God: it was Mr. Seixas' voice that I first heard lifted up in prayer to the throne of Grace, and in his presence it was that I returned thanks for the undeserved mercy that had been shown unto me. Several years after this elapsed that I lived under his ministry, and I will mention it to his credit, and it is a fact with which few of you are acquainted, that he was the first who proposed what has since been carried into successful operation, I mean the gratuitous instruction in religious matters on certain days in the week. It was in the Synagogue at Richmond where he, feebly assisted by me, commenced teaching on the Sabbath and the first day of the week, such children and youths as desired religious instruction. If the success was not so great as we at one time hoped, it was owing to the great difficulties we had to encounter. But I may freely say, that the seed was thus sown, and one at least has ever since had hopes of a revival of religion among our brethren in this land, and he trusts to be spared to see the devoutly wished-for con-

summation happily accomplished. A blessed time indeed will that hour be, when our youths and maidens, natives of this soil, will be joyful servants of the Most High, devoted followers of the law of the God of Jacob! And when we see the spread of piety, when we see many disenthralled from the bonds of selfish gain: let us pronounce a blessing on the name of him who was the first to commence the righteous work, which has since been undertaken with promise of better success by the pious daughters of Israel in different places, as is known to you all this day.

But this is not the only cause why I should mourn with the nearest friends and relatives of the deceased. It was under him that I first learned the accepted mode of our worship, and was thus fitted to be summoned to officiate in the sanctuary where I have these ten years endeavoured, though I fear unworthily, to proclaim the word of life, which has been graciously bestowed on a sinning world by its merciful Creator. Many times, since that period, have the hand of affliction, and the suffering of severe bodily illness been laid on me; death in various forms has threatened me, once especially, when the beloved, the only other son of my parents was removed from me: I could not then imagine that I should be suffered to survive to officiate on this occasion, and to perform the last solemn rites of our faith over him whom I may freely call my teacher, without a great stretch of the imagination. But so are the inscrutable decrees of Providence; "He woundeth, and his hands also heal," "He bringeth down to the grave, and raiseth up again;" and we see his omnipotent power displayed no less in his visitations than in his mercies. Let

us therefore improve the occasion, mournful and afflictive though it be, so that the death of this servant in the house of God may redound to our advantage. It was but, so to say, yesterday, that he walked among us; not two weeks have elapsed since he accompanied me on my return to the city where I have been chosen as the messenger of the congregation; we parted in the principal street of this extensive city; he appeared in health, and surely no thought of so speedy a dissolution could have entered into his imagination. Yet scarcely had a week rolled on in the ceaseless course of time, when I heard tidings of his illness, and next of his unexpected and lamented death.—Often and often has this truth been forced upon our view, that the tenure of life is uncertain, that we are not assured whether to-morrow's sun will shine for us, or whether the rising moon, which finds us in high expectation of a length of years, may not send her setting rays upon our couch of death. Yes, so uncertain is life; and still our plans reach as it were into the space of centuries; we grasp the existence of many generations, when scarcely one hour may yet be ours. But does it not strike you that this grasping and this striving do not become man destined to die? should one, whose life is so limited, extend his view so far, and seek for things which he cannot attain? Better indeed would it be for each and all, were every man early to reflect on the fleeting state of his existence here, and to fix his hopes on yonder haven beyond the grave—the grave, the embrace of which no one can escape, were he to live a thousand years, instead of the threescore and ten allotted to us. These hopes would teach him, that he

has the power given him of earning felicity by an obedience to the will of his Maker, who, in giving him life and being, also bestowed on him a law which, if obeyed, will lead to happiness. But there is no time for delay—next year—next month—to-morrow—nay, this day, this hour, may be our last, and the opportunity may thus be lost of acquiring felicity, if we do not act immediately. It becomes therefore our duty to act always so, as though every day were the last of our life, and to endeavour to repair through repentance any evil which we may have committed,—in order that we may deserve the favour of our Maker at any moment when it may please Him to summon us in his presence. Obedience to the will of God is truly the balm of life, the real object of our existence; for its riches no tyrant can ever take from us, its wealth no misfortune can snatch away, and no canker-worm can deface the beauty of the garment which it throws around our spirit. For thus teaches the Bible:

סוף דבר הכל נשמע את האלהים ירא ואת מצותיו שמור כי זה כל האדם: קהלת יב' יג':

"The end of the matter, even all that hath been heard is, fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Ecc. xii. 13.

If we are then snatched away after a brief notice from earthly life and its enjoyments: we shall have the consolation in our last moments, a consolation outweighing far all the pearls of Persia, and the diamonds from the sands of India, more sweet by far

than the senseless shout of admiring thousands, of having accomplished our task on earth, and of being able to restore our soul in its purity into the hands of Him who gave it.

Let us hope that he, for whom we now mourn, has been received into the abode of the righteous, among those who have fulfilled well their mission on earth; and that his sins have been forgiven (for there is no man so righteous that he sin not); and that his bodily sufferings and the pangs of death have purified his spirit from the dross of iniquity.—But for those who survive him, for his bereaved widow, his fatherless children, let us invoke the mercy of Heaven: may He bestow on them his consolation, even his blessed spirit, which abideth with the lowly and contrite, and may He shield them by his beneficent protection from all evil, and guide them unto happiness both on earth and when their spirit is freed from the trammels of the body. May He be the Protector of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless, and teach them to regard Him, the holy and righteous One, as their sole Refuge, as He is the Refuge and Solace of all the children of man, and especially of his people Israel, whom He chose to be his servants, and the promulgators of his law on earth. Amen.

Elul 2d. } 5599.
Aug. 12th. }

NOTE.—The Reverend Isaac Benjamin Seixas, minister of the congregation Sheerith Israel of New York, died on Sabbath evening, the 1st of Elul, 5599. I was sent for by his congregation to perform the funeral service over my deceased friend; the time left me for throwing together a few appropriate remarks for this mourn-

ful occasion was necessarily limited to less than two hours before retiring to rest on Sunday night; as I had to commence my journey to New York early in the morning. The reader will therefore excuse both the brevity and the great imperfections with which the above tribute may justly be charged; it ought perhaps not to have appeared at all in this collection, were it not that I thought myself not at liberty to pass over the decease of Mr. Seixas, without acknowledging that a part of my usefulness as a minister of our congregation was owing to his instruction.

ADDRESS

ON THE

PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS IN THE EAST.

DELIVERED AT

THE SYNAGOGUE MIKVEH ISRAEL,

ON THURSDAY EVENING, THE 28th OF AB, 5600—27th OF AUGUST, 1840.

A MEETING to express sympathy and to devise means of relief for the Israelites persecuted in the East, especially in Damascus, Syria, on account of false accusations, as though they had been guilty of the death of a Catholic priest, was held in the Synagogue as mentioned above: when Mr. A. Hart gave a succinct history of the cruelties practised against our brethren, and concluded with an appeal to the feelings and sympathy of the audience. I then spoke as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN AND BRETHREN!

The gentleman who has preceded me has stated to you the reason of our asssembling at this unusual time* at the house of God. We, the inhabitants of a land where a benevolent Providence causes to prevail an equality of rights and an entire freedom in religious pursuits, have met for the purpose of publicly expressing our sympathy for those of our brothers

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* Alluding to the lateness of the hour, which was past the usual period of the evening service.

who, living where the "bond of slavery, twineth," have lately been subjected to persecutions at which the blood runs cold, and this for the sake of false accusations brought against them, not as men, but as members of the Jewish community. Were it that they only suffered unjustly, even if the charge did not touch our ancient system of faith, still, as sons of Israel, we ourselves would *feel* the wrong that they have unjustly to bear. But now we have an additional incentive to rouse our every feeling of commiseration and regret; since the religion, which we profess in common with them, has been stigmatized as though it authorized the shedding of human blood at the recurrence of the annual Passover. You may perhaps smile that such an absurd accusation should at all be made! you may feel contempt at the ignorance which could give credence to such superannuated folly! but our smile of derision, our hearty contempt, do not affect the mass who regard not with kindness the remnant of Israel, and will not disarm the malice of those who are only glad of every opportunity to send new sorrows to our bosoms.—It is not the first time that it has been said and believed that the Jews are commanded to slay their Christian neighbours; and at a time when the pestilence raged over almost the whole known world, our people were accused of causing the great destruction of human life by poisoning the wells, simply because in proportion to numbers less Jews died than Christians. The consequence was that multitudes of the accused were butchered without pity, and those whom the *Black Death* had spared fell a prey to the fury of an excited populace, rendered lawless by the prevalence of a fatal disorder,

which daily hurried thousands to the tomb. And whenever superstition and rapacity wished to glut themselves in the destruction of our defenceless race, the charge of murder for our religious rites was raised, and, as was the case lately, it was made the pretext for unsheathing the sword and dooming countless numbers of innocent victims to merciless slaughter. O! then were times of sorrow and affliction; we wept, but no one pitied, our gore rendered turbid the streams, but all passed carelessly by; they heeded not our cries, they regarded us as aliens to the rights of man, outcasts from Divine favour. Those were indeed times when our harps were hung upon the willows; when the voice of wailing was heard in every home; when the houses of prayer were filled, not with living worshippers, but with the bodies of those slain by the unpitying persecutor. Whither then could we fly? We were shunned as murderers, as those unclean with leprosy, as banished from the pale of the laws; and every land almost forbade us its boundaries, nearly every city shut its gates against our fugitives; and where we were permitted to rest awhile we had to purchase at a high price the protection of some powerful chieftain, whether civil or ecclesiastical; and then we had to suffer ourselves to be confined to narrow and unwholesome quarters, and to be marked in our garments as sons of Jacob. Well might a noble poet,* who, had he always acted as he at times felt, would have been the glory of human nature, thus speak of the sorrowing nation descended from Abraham:

* Lord Byron.

1.

"Oh! weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream;
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell;
Mourn—where their God hath dwelt the godless dwell!

2.

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leaped before its heavenly voice?

3.

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest?
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave!"

This was literally true for centuries, our homes were not safe from invasion, our sanctuaries ever open to the spoiler, and our sons and daughters constantly the object of derision, or food for the sword. Mankind had conspired against us, and death alone was viewed as an unassailable refuge against the ills that accumulated over our heads. And even where permission to dwell was granted us, we were yet excluded from a share in equal rights, and tolerated merely as excrescences on the body politic, condemned to low pursuits,—prohibited the exercise of mechanic arts and the study of ennobling professions, —and continually subjected to exactions and rapine.

In those days of affliction, contempt and scorn were our universal portion; and Turk, and Pagan, and Christian, alike contributed to pour the bitterness of gall into our cup of life. Yet through us had the world been greatly blessed since the latter days of the first temple. Our views of the Deity, of

the exalted attributes of the Creator, had by degrees been infused into the philosophy of the heathen, and they had learned a new source of joy by looking unto a state of pure enjoyment after the life of the body had become extinct, and to regard the idols which they worshipped in their true light of creatures of the imagination.—At a later period there arose one of our own community, who, be the accounts related of him false or true, was nevertheless the means of the spread of a system analogous to our own over a large portion of the pagan world; he became, though doubtless without himself dreaming of such a result, the messenger of better things to many who knew not God. Still was he a son of Abraham, a professor of the same religion we profess at this very hour; and he enjoined, if there be any truth in the books said to contain an account of his life, an adherence to the law as it existed at his day; at the same time all the injunctions of brotherly love which he is said to have promulgated, are clearly referable to the Law of Moses and the sayings of our blessed Rabbins.—After his death, and centuries after his religion had begun to spread, there appeared another claiming affinity with our race, and pronounced himself inspired to teach better things to mankind; and he too founded his doctrines upon the Law of Moses, even so far as to recognize, in addition to the unity of God, a weekly day of rest and the prohibition of certain articles of food, besides the fundamental covenant of Abraham. Speedily persuasion and the sword banished, under his guidance and that of his immediate successors, the worship of idols from Arabia, Iran, Tartary, and the far India; even Ethiopia, the coasts of Africa,

and Spain, nay, the very distant islands of the Eastern Archipelago, and the countries beyond the great desert, inaccessible almost now to the European's foot, acknowledged the sway of the Koran, and the Islam became the law of as large a portion of mankind as then acknowledged the Christian Gospels. —Yet, take it as we will, these two mighty revolutions in opinion were the effect of the religion of the Jews, an adoption of an essential part, with the rejection of the ceremonial laws, by many and powerful nations. In this manner then were civilization and an enlightened philosophy indebted to the Jews, or rather the code they then obeyed, and to this day obey, for much, if not all their progress; and whatever of equality of rights, of mercy, and benevolence, is now prevalent, we may freely say, has its foundation in the Pentateuch, the law of the Jews. Does now the Christian religion recommend human sacrifice? does the Koran command a victim to be slain at the great festival of the Moslems? We know the answer must be in the negative; nothing but ignorance, wilful ignorance, could charge the Monotheists who are not Jews with the commission of a crime so foreign to their belief. But does the Jewish law, less than that of Christians or Mahomedans, demand the exercise of mercy, forbid the commission of murder? We have yet to learn that it does; for he who has no mercy is no son of Israel, and he who pollutes his hands with human blood becomes a prey to the sword of the avenger. We know of no difference between the Israelite and the stranger; we are bound to assist every one in distress, and our neighbour is he who, like us, bears the stamp of the human face

divine, be his opinions what they may; be he our friend or our enemy!

And yet, how much have we had to suffer, because of the accusation that we employed human blood, the blood of our Christian fellow-men, in the celebration of the birth of our people! We ask, Where is the historical evidence that such a thing ever took place? We demand, Where is the permission to be discovered, I will not say in the Pentateuch, but in any of our writings? To eat of the blood, nay, in the smallest quantity, of a brute animal, is most energetically interdicted: and can reason be so blinded as to suppose, that we would mix human blood in the unleavened bread, over which we call down the blessings of the Lord, and return thanks for his manifold mercies to his people Israel? We will admit, that at a period when the rights of the subject were but imperfectly understood, when a pontiff could dispose of crowns as of ecclesiastical benefices, when a mighty effort was made to enforce a uniformity of opinions, when the iron-clad barons were not able to sign their names, when might made right, and the dictum of one man could not be disputed, except at the risk of life: it might have been supposed possible for the multitude to be deluded by the persuasion of those whose lead they followed, to believe any absurdity with regard to the Jews who lived among them as outcasts from human rights, and whose supposed wealth was always an object to be coveted by the lords no less than by the rabble. But it surpasses belief that, with the progress of enlightened principles, this absurd idea should have survived in its odious deformity; at a time, too, when

Spain, once the slave at the feet of an Inquisition, demands a free constitution, and when the new Sultan of the Osmalins gives a new charter to his people, who will doubtless in future ages revere the name of Abdul Medjid, whatever his fate now may be in those mutations, from which thrones are not exempt.—We cannot be too much astonished at the folly or effrontery which, at the present day, pretends to lend credence to a foul calumny which the better disposed, during even the dark ages, refused to entertain. But so it is, the mass is ever ready to put faith in the marvellous and the extraordinary, no matter if their absurdity should be apparent on the very surface; and all we can say is that, with the progress of civilization, many have fallen behind the march of intellect in others, and that human nature is prone to err, and this in an aggravated degree, at all ages of the world. Were any proof of this wanting, the recent tragic scenes in Damascus and Rhodes would give ample confirmation. You must know, Mr. Chairman, that not everywhere have our rights been acknowledged as in this happy land, happy for the Israelite, because here no one can demand of him a test-oath to testify to that which he inwardly disbelieves, before he is permitted to fill a station for which his talents qualify him. Yet, in many lands we are tolerated merely, and constitute not a part of the state, as we do here and in some other enlightened countries. So, too, in the dominions of the Pacha of Egypt, the renowned Mehemet Ali, are we left unprotected by any law, save the will of the ruling chief, or those who administer the government in his name; add to which that in the lands of the East, human life is

not held sacred, but is ever at the mercy of the despot, and the possession of wealth is often the passport to destruction.

Now it so happened, as you already know, that an old man disappeared; whether murdered or not, no one has clearly shown; and if murdered, it has not yet been proved, as far as our knowledge extends, who his murderers are. But our brothers in Damascus are wealthy, they are subject, at the best of times, to great cruelties and grinding exactions: and do you think that so favourable an opportunity for pillage would be suffered to pass? Little would you know the spirit of despotism if you were to think so; for though ever ready to oppress, it greedily seizes every opportunity to give some colouring of justice to its exactions. The result has been what might naturally have been expected. One humble individual, at first arrested upon the vaguest suspicion, was beaten till his tormentors could not do otherwise than cease in the infliction; he was taken back to prison, and there tampered with to induce him to accuse, not those of a low degree like himself, but the first in wealth and learning which the city could furnish. They were seized and tortured; some died under the excruciating pain they had to endure; others accused themselves guilty of the crime of murdering the missing individual; one adopted the Mussulman religion; whilst others, patiently enduring the most intense suffering, still clung to the truth, and refused making any confession of guilt in themselves or others, of which they were guiltless. The name of one of these noble martyrs has reached me, it is *Mussa Salonikli*, who adhered to the protestation of

his innocence when the endurance of others was broken down. Such a man deserves to be held in honourable remembrance for future ages, as an example of a true Israelite, who exhibited a filial confidence in his God under the greatest trials to which poor mortality can be subjected.—But with the seizure of the first accused the persecution did not stop; others of the best and noblest were barbarously maltreated, and many children were thrown into prison, and kept upon miserable food, to induce their parents to come forward and accuse persons acceptable to the monster Sheriff Pacha, who, if report speaks true, must have known from the recantation of one who had embraced Moslemism, that the charge of murder against our brothers was no less false than foul.

You may ask, Why did not the Jews rise against their oppressors? But, Mr. Chairman, ages of suffering deaden the spirit; and they render powerless the hands of those who otherwise might strike for their own liberation; faint-heartedness has long, therefore, been the lot of our brothers who languish under oppression, and many have become passive even under every cruelty. We who, under different circumstances, feel so very differently, must not, in the knowledge of our security, despise those whom adverse fortunes have bowed down so deeply; on the contrary, let us admire their patient endurance, for having remained true to our faith under every trial they had to undergo.

Let us from the midst of our thankfulness to God for having blessed us so much more than we deserve, express our sympathy for those who suffer elsewhere;

those who, with us, are descended from the stock of the Patriarchs. But what need is there for this appeal? Around me are those who have assembled for no other purpose than to express, in language not to be misunderstood, that they feel for their brothers who languish under the cruel bondage of oppression; that every cry of anguish, uttered by their fellow-believers elsewhere, touches a sympathetic chord in their own hearts.—O, this is a soothing reflection! we have no country of our own; we have no longer a united government, under the shadow of which we can live securely; but we have a tie yet holier than a fatherland, a patriotism stronger than the community of one government: our tie is a sincere brotherly love, our patriotism is the affection which unites the Israelite of one land to that of another. As citizens we belong to the country we live in; but as believers in one God, as the faithful adorers of the Creator, as the inheritors of the law, the Jews of England, and Russia, and Sweden are no aliens among us, and we hail the Israelite as a brother, no matter if his home be the torrid zone, or where the poles encircle the earth with the impenetrable fetters of icy coldness. We have therefore met for the purpose of expressing our abhorrence of the calumny cast on our religion in another part of the world, and to offer our aid, in conjunction with our brothers in other towns, both of this country and elsewhere, to those who have been subjected to such unmerited barbarities. Perhaps the united voice of all the professors of our blessed religion may reach the ears of the potentates of the earth; perhaps public attention may be roused to the wrongs we have so long suf-

fered, and all acknowledge that our system is one of love and peace, and that it is an essential point with us to do our duty to the state no less than to observe the divine commands. If this should be the case, if those differing from us would grant us everywhere an equality of rights, not as apostates from, but as adherents to, our ancient religion: then indeed will the martyrs at Damascus not have suffered in vain, for their sorrows would then bring peace to Israel. —Now, Mr. Chairman, is this hoping for too much? I hardly think so. Already the transaction which we deplore has raised up advocates for us among our Christian friends; and if the name of Ratti-Menton will live in the disgrace which he so well merits, the generous Mr. Merlato at Damascus, and Mr. Laurin at Alexandria, who there represent the Emperor of Austria, will be remembered with gratitude for their unsolicited exertions in our behalf.—In England, too, the subject has awakened attention, and one of its great minds, who formerly opposed our admission to equal rights, the renowned Sir Robert Peel, has already thought proper to mention the case of the sufferers in Parliament, with every demonstration that he too feels that a great wrong has been done to an innocent people. There too has been an O'Connell, a Noel, a Thompson, and many others to speak in our behalf; and doubtless in this land too, perhaps in this city, men will step forward to vindicate the rights of man outraged in the persons of the Jews at Damascus. Perhaps a voice too loud to remain unheeded may be raised against the use of torture in trials, so that the Pacha of Egypt, in whose dominions are Damascus and Jerusalem, may be induced

to abolish it altogether; and so not we alone, but all the inhabitants of the earth, may have cause to rejoice in the present movement in which we are engaged, though sorrow was its first promoter. And why should the case of the Jews be less attended to than that of the Greeks? When the sons of ancient Hellas broke the chains of the Ottoman power, all Europe and America were awakened in their behalf; but have they any greater claim upon the sympathy of the world than we have? We admit that the Greeks may have been the fathers of architecture, of painting, of sculpture, and of tragic poetry; but the world is indebted to us far more, for a gift far nobler, for the possession of the Decalogue, for the word of God, the holy and precious Bible, the book more venerable than all books, the parent of a pure belief, the foundation of true happiness, of religion without bigotry, of liberty without licentiousness.

Another happy effect has already resulted from the same cause: it has awakened anew the spirit of brotherly love among us, and we have had an opportunity of experiencing that oceans may intervene between our dispersed remnants, that mountains may divide us, but that yet the Israelite is ever alive to the welfare of his distant brother, and sorrows with his sorrow, and rejoices in his joy. The times also have produced spirits adequate to the emergency, and a Crémieux of Paris, and a Montefiore of London, will be long remembered as the generous, active friends of their people, who nobly volunteered to plead the cause of their brothers in distant lands. Let us trust that the Lord may prosper their way, and bring them

back to their families after the happy termination of their mission of love.

It is now, Mr. Chairman, as ever it was: although banished and scattered over every land for our manifold transgressions, we are not cast off nor utterly forsaken by our God. He has been our shield, as He was the shield of our forefathers; and as out of every evil He always caused good to spring unto Israel, so let us hope that this present occasion may not pass away without a proportionate benefit accruing unto us and the world at large, under the dispensation of his Providence. I say "unto us and the world at large;" since our cause is not the cause of faction, and when we prosper it is not for the oppression of any human being; for never yet were our people persecutors for opinion's sake, because the law of God was always a code of toleration and benevolence; and then, the more the knowledge of the truth is spread, the more it is understood, the stronger will be the feeling of attachment which will unite all the inhabitants of the earth as a nation of brothers.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I will repeat the words of the wise Solomon, invoking the blessing of our heavenly Father upon us and our undertaking: "The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; O may He not leave, nor forsake us; may He incline our hearts towards Him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, his statutes and judgments which He commanded our fathers."

With your permission, I will now offer a preamble and a series of resolutions for the approval of this meeting:

The Israelites residing in Philadelphia, in common with those of other places, have heard with the deepest sorrow, that in this enlightened age the absurd charge of their requiring human blood, at the celebration of their Passover, has been revived, and that an accusation of this nature having been brought against their brethren at Damascus and the Island of Rhodes has been the cause of a most cruel persecution being waged against them, by order of the Mussulman authorities, instigated, as it is feared, by one or more of the European residents.

They have learned also, with unfeigned horror, that several prominent men at Damascus have been seized by their ruthless persecutors, and tortured till some confessed themselves guilty of a crime which they never committed; and others died under the most exquisite barbarities, which ignorant bigotry, urged by the love of plunder and hatred of the Jewish name, could invent.

Although the Israelites of Philadelphia, living in a land where, under the blessing of Providence, equality of civil and religious rights so eminently prevails, are not in any danger of persecution for opinion's sake: still they cannot rest while so foul a blot is cast upon their ancient and sacred faith, a faith on which both the Christian and Mahomedan religions are founded, and which is essentially a law of justice, of mercy, and benevolence; and they would deem themselves traitors to brotherly love and the rights of outraged humanity, were they to withhold their expression of sympathy for their suffering brethren, who writhe under unmerited tortures, and languish in loathsome dungeons, and to offer their aid, if prac-

ticable, to have impartial justice administered to them upon the present and any future occasion. The Israelites of Philadelphia have therefore met in public meeting, and

Resolved, That they experience the deepest emotions of sympathy for the sufferings endured by their fellows in faith at Damascus and Rhodes, under the tortures and injuries inflicted upon them by merciless and savage persecutors; and that, while they mourn for those upon whom such cruel enormities have been heaped, they cannot but admire the fortitude evinced by many of the sufferers, who preferred enduring every torture rather than subscribing to the falsehoods dictated by their vindictive enemies.

Resolved, That the crime charged upon the Israelites of Damascus, of using Christian blood for their festival of redemption from Egypt, is utterly at variance with the express injunction of the Decalogue and other parts of the Pentateuch, and incompatible with the principles inculcated by the religion they profess, which enjoins them to "love their neighbour as themselves," and "to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God."

Resolved, That they will co-operate with their brethren elsewhere in affording pecuniary aid, if required, to relieve the victims of this unholy persecution, and to unite in such other measures as may be devised to mitigate their sufferings.

Resolved, That the thanks of this meeting be accorded to the consuls of those European powers, who made efforts to stay the arm of persecution, and who by this deed deserve well of the cause of suffering humanity.

Resolved, That this meeting highly appreciates the prompt and energetic measures adopted by our brethren in Europe, and elsewhere, for the promotion of the object of this meeting, and the noble undertaking of Monsieur Crémieux and Sir Moses Montefiore, in coming forward not only as the champions of the oppressed, but also as the defenders of the Jewish nation; and this meeting expresses the hope that the God of Israel will shield and protect them, and restore them to their families in the enjoyment of unimpaired health.

Resolved, That, in conjunction with our brethren in other cities, a letter be addressed to the President of the United States, respectfully requesting him to instruct the representative of the United States at Constantinople, and the United States' Consul in the dominions of the Pacha of Egypt, to co-operate with the Ambassadors and Consuls of other powers to procure for our accused brethren at Damascus and elsewhere an impartial trial; and to urge upon the Emperor of Turkey and the Pacha of Egypt to prohibit the use of torture in their judicial proceedings; and farther, that he be requested to instruct the representatives of this country to urge the governments to which they are accredited, to exert their influence for the same purpose.*

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* The *Resolutions* were the joint production of different persons, and so appear in the pamphlet containing the transactions of the meeting. Several other resolutions adopted are omitted here as containing nothing of a permanent character.

It is to be remarked, that the first report of the wealth of the Israelites at Damascus is said to have been much exaggerated, and they are, as we have been informed since the meeting, poor in every

respect, with few exceptions only; but it would also seem that these very persons were selected as the objects of persecution, together with a few who held a high station for learning and influence. It is also reported that *four* actually expired under the tortures which they had to suffer.

[At the above meeting, several Christian clergymen also spoke, and expressed their admiration for Israel, and their sympathy for the sufferers. We would specify Rev. Dr. H. W. Ducachet, of the Episcopal, and Rev. William Ramsey, of the Presbyterian church, both of whom have departed this life, since this was first printed. A change has since taken place in Palestine, and it is to be hoped that such scenes as above described, may never occur again in the land of Israel, or the countries bordering on it, which were promised to us as our proper dominion.—June, '37.]

PRAYER,

AT THE

FIRST ANNIVERSARY PUBLIC EXAMINATION

OF THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF ISRAELITES IN PHILADELPHIA,

HELD ON SUNDAY, ADAR 17th, 5599—MARCH 3d, 1839,

AT THE MASONIC HALL.

O OUR GOD! and the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob thy servants, whose words are true, and whose faithfulness is never-failing, Thou hast spoken through the mouth of the messenger "faithful in all thy house:" "In all places where I shall permit my name to be mentioned, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." Do Thou now according to thy promise, and let thy glory be here present among us, unseen by our eyes, but inwardly felt in our spirit. Dwell in our heart, and purify it unto thy service; remove from it deceit, cunning, and duplicity, so that we may not be led to falter in our duty and love to Thee; but fortify us, strengthen us, that we may be elevated above the desires of the sinful flesh—despising worldly gain which would counsel us to transgress thy holy will—rejecting the desires of the heart of stone which would seek to place its own pursuits

above the commandments of thy life-bringing law. And O our Father! teach us to feel our nothingness, for a shadow are our days on earth; enable us by thy grace to look upon this life as a pilgrimage to thy blissful dwelling; in order that when blessed with worldly goods we may look upon them as means for our happiness, not as our destined happiness; means given by thy favour only, to be taken back when in thy wisdom Thou deemest us no longer worthy of enjoying them. Teach us to regard such wealth as belonging entirely to Thee, so that we may conquer our unholy desire for worldly possessions and devote a part of our substance to thy service, "inasmuch as from Thee is all, and we give only unto Thee what thy bounty hath bestowed on us."—But also if Thou hast decreed that we should labour in vain, if Thou hast withholden thy blessing from the work of our hands: inspire us with fortitude to be resigned to thy will, and guard us from a rebellious spirit which would fain mislead us from the path marked out for us by thy wisdom. And also if bodily suffering is apportioned to us, let thy goodness be our shield; that even whilst the body is tortured by pain, and our soul takes hence her upward flight, we may unceasingly sing thy praise.—And wherever we are, whithersoever thy providence may lead us, be Thou our Portion and Protector; guard us by the refuge of thy wings from the terrors of the night, from the arrow that flieth by day, from the pestilence that stalketh in the darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at the noon of day. Let thy care be at all times over us as a shield and a buckler, so that securely we may pass our allotted time on earth.

Display farther thy goodness unto us, and cause that thy name may be sanctified out of the mouth of these children who have been drawn hither to imbibe instruction of thy will, by the aid of the daughters of thy servants who have devoted themselves to the goodly work. Bless the scholars with an understanding heart and a willing spirit; that they, comprehending the truth, may learn to preserve it ever sacred in their hearts, and as willing servants be always ready to teach unto others the truth that in them dwelleth, and to inculcate by precept and a uniformly virtuous holy life to those who may come after them the sacred truths which Thou hast revealed. Teach them of thy own wisdom; enlighten them above those who instruct them; and let thy unity be firmly fixed in their souls, and strengthen them so that amidst all trials, nay in the last moments of dissolution, the acknowledgment of Thee, O only One God and everlasting King! may never be moved from their mouth, but that in sincerity and entire faith they may exclaim: "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is One." And grant that from this school thy law may spread, and that servants and faithful followers may be multiplied in Israel unto the end of time. Upon the teachers also bestow thy blessing, guard their lips from uttering error, and their tongue from deceit; be Thou with them in their teaching, and let nothing but truth, nothing but what is according to thy will be taught by them; for Thou alone, our God and Instructor, canst guard us against error, and unless upheld by Thee we are like the blind struggling amid pitfalls and snares. Let thy wisdom, which erst inspired thy prophets, fill their minds with due under-

standing that they may conduct those looking up to them for the waters of life unto the fountain whence alone issues the refreshing stream of holiness and true knowledge. Bless these thy handmaids, who have devoted themselves to dispense religious knowledge without fee or price, with thy favour, and enable them to lead a life consistent with their sacred calling; let them be pure themselves, and give them grace to purify others; grant that they may be quick in understanding thy law, and blessed whilst blessing others; and cause that their example may be followed in other places, until there be no son or daughter of Israel that is unacquainted with thy service in the utmost ends of the earth.

Upon this city likewise and its inhabitants shed thy blessing, and bestow plenty and competence upon all the children of thy creation. Upon this land grant the blessing of peace, let not the clash of armour, the rushing of the war steed, the rattling of the sword and the roar of the deadly artillery be heard in its boundaries, and fill the hearts of its rulers and citizens with wisdom, that they may govern with justice and mercy; and fill the whole land with a spirit of benevolence and kindness, that every man may forbear from righting himself by the strength of his own hand.

O Lord! relying upon thy unbounded goodness we have dared to approach Thee, and to ask the many undeserved favours we stand in need of: not upon our righteousness do we rely, but upon thy unlimited mercies. Do Thou therefore, and because of thy covenant with our fathers, hear our voice in thy high abode, and forgive us our trespasses and our iniquity, for well we know that we have sinned, we and our

fathers; but not according to our deeds wilt Thou act towards us, for thy wont is to withhold long thy anger, and thy custom is to have compassion upon thy creatures who return unto Thee with a repentant spirit. Have mercy then on Israel thy people and on Jerusalem thy city on which thy name is called; and send salvation into the world through him whom Thou wilt send as the harbinger of peace, even the anointed, the son of David, and Elijah the angel of the covenant. "And may the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." May this be thy will, O our Father and King! from now unto everlasting. Amen.

Adar 15th. } 5599.
March 1st. }

PRAYER,

AT THE

SECOND ANNUAL EXAMINATION

OF THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL,

HELD VEADAR 24, 5600—MARCH 29, 1840,

AT THE SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL.

May thy name, O Lord our God! be praised unto everlasting, even from eternity to eternity; for Thine is the glory and the power, and thy providence watches over all the beings whom thy word has created. Wherever we turn, we behold the works of thy goodness, the doings of thy beneficence; and life, and health, and wisdom, and light are all gifts which proceed from Thee solely. For who is with Thee in heaven? and who is near Thee on earth? Above, Thou reignest alone, there is no second to share the rule with Thee, omnipotent Father! and on earth all are thy creatures, all the works of thy own hands. There is no saviour without Thee; for when Thou woundest, who shall heal? if Thou smitest, who can save from thy power? and if thy wrath is enkindled, who shall appease Thee, save it be that thy mercy forgives the repentant sinner? It is to

Thee, therefore, that we call in our distress; to Thee, therefore, we pray; to Thee, therefore, we bend the knee. O, that all flesh might like us be taught to revere Thee alone! O, that all Israel might be made of one heart, and one spirit, to serve Thee in truth and sincerity!

The heavens and the heavens of heavens cannot contain Thee, for all have sprung from Thee; all is sustained by thy might; all lives only with and through Thee. Yet Thou hast ever deigned to fix thy dwelling in the midst of thy servants, and from the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast founded thy mighty works; the deeds done by the innocent, the words of purity flowing from their mouth are to Thee agreeable savour; and Thou delightest in the offering of prayer which the humble sacrifice unto Thee, O our Saviour! Behold us then this day assembled in this house which has been built for thy worship, with our children, our sons and daughters, whom thy servants endeavour to rear up to know and to fear Thee all the days they may live on earth, and to instruct them in the law of thy will which Thou gavest unto our forefathers in the days of yore, when they beheld thy glory, saw thy consuming fire, and heard thy potent voice. How shall we thank Thee? how shall we praise Thee, for this boon which Thou didst so graciously bestow on us, by which Thou hast separated us from the heathen, and brought us near unto thy service to fear thy name, and to be the witnesses of thy glory? In all our wanderings it has been our stay, amidst all our sorrows it has been our support; and unto this day we are sustained through it as a people distinct and separate from the other

nations of the earth. We humbly confess, that it is not our wisdom and our knowledge that have done this, but the wisdom and the knowledge which Thou didst impart unto us through the hands of thy servant Moses, the chosen messenger of thy goodness. We therefore implore Thee, O Lord our God, and God of our fathers! to strengthen us in our striving to promulgate the knowledge of thy word; to instil into us, and all those engaged in teaching the precepts of thy code, persuasive wisdom, and eloquence of speech, that our words may sink deep into the hearts of all those who come to learn, that the seed which is planted mid labour and sorrow may produce fruits of holiness and devotion, promoting adoration of Thee, the only God, and love to our fellow-men, who, like us, have received a living soul and a feeling heart.

May it also be thy will, to receive in favour this endeavour of the daughters of Israel in this and other cities, to found institutions for the spread of godliness; prosper their work, forward their enterprise, and grant that whilst blessing they may be blest; that whilst teaching they may learn; that whilst purifying they may be purified, and brought to a knowledge of the good, and be led to follow that path of righteousness and truth which leads to everlasting happiness. May many be induced to imitate their example; may their reward be a multitude of disciples, freed from the bonds of unbelief, armed with the knowledge of truth, that they may be able to withstand the attacks of those who love not Israel, and who would gladly wean them from the observance of thy precepts.

But what are we, that we have been brought hither? what is our life? what is our righteousness? A day passes, and we are cut off; Thou hidest thy face, and we perish; in the midst of our devotion our thoughts often wander; and whilst worshipping, our mind is turned towards gain and vanities of this life. All the benefits we receive from Thee are undeserved by us; thy bounty is extended to thy children, but they merit it not. Miracles have been wrought in our support; unheard-of deeds have been displayed that we might be preserved, but not because of our righteousness, but only because of thy mercy, which is unending. Ere we prayed, Thou ever didst answer; before our thoughts were uttered, Thou didst hear; and when affliction's waves threatened to overwhelm us, thy power stayed the destructive current, and we received enlargement. We therefore throw ourselves humbly upon the continuance of thy mercy; guard us, as Thou wert wont to guard; shield us as Thou ever didst shield; preserve unto us the knowledge of thy law, and cause its precepts to speak a language which may find a response in the heart of every son of man, and especially of all these young charges, whom thy servants have assembled together in thy house, and endeavour to lead unto the footstool of thy greatness. Multiply the teachers, strengthen them in their effort, and let their reward be, that the good they now do may produce a plentiful harvest of righteousness and truth.

And upon thy servant,* who, by Thee permitted,

* Alluding to the Rev. Moses N. Nathan, of Kingston, Jamaica, who being on a visit to this country, was requested and kindly con-

has spoken of thy goodness and thy law in the distant isle of the sea, where they, who, like us, call on thy unity, have reared houses for thy service, do Thou shed thy grace and truth, and cause us to be instructed and to profit by the words he will address to us. Arm his tongue with persuasiveness, that we all may leave this house to-day improved and better than we entered. Bless his labours for thy glory, wherever they may be exerted, and cause him to return to his station, in the fellowship of the daughter of Jacob his companion, in restored health, in renewed vigour, and increased usefulness.

Father of all! we farther pray Thee, to let thy countenance shine unto us, and unto all Israel; and shield us by the shadow of thy wings from the many calamities we are subject to, because that we are flesh. Strengthen us, that when in health, we may overcome the evil of our inclinations, and that, when our body is racked by pain, we may be prepared to resign cheerfully our spirit into thy hands, O our King! Let thy grace and thy holy spirit be ever with us; remember the captivity of Jacob, and forsake not the outcasts of Israel, and suffer not the gentiles to devour them, lest they say, Where is their God? Preserve unto us also the blessing of freedom which we enjoy in this land, and grant that a spirit of pure benevolence may become universal toward thy people in every country of their dispersion. But above all, fulfil unto us the promise made to us through

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sented to address the congregation and children upon the above occasion. His eloquent address was published and extensively circulated along with the other proceedings of that interesting meeting.

thy prophet, who spoke: "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart from thy mouth, nor from the mouth of thy children, nor from the mouth of thy children's children, saith the Lord, from now, and for ever."—May this be thy will. Amen.

Veadar 24th.
March 29th. } 5600.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.